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COLLEGE ENGLISH

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Sholem Asch: Still Immigrant and Alien

OSCAR CARGILL¹

I

I AM told," wrote Ellen Glasgow in 1938, "that excellent American novels are written in Yiddish"; but, had she been pressed, it is doubtful if she could have named these excellent novels or their talented authors. Nor, probably, could nine-tenths of the professional writers in this country have done so either. Yet one book by the most distinguished of these Yiddish novelists had been in translation for twenty years, and the author, Sholem Asch, had been the subject of newspaper notoriety before that when his play *The God of Vengeance* had been banned in New York and its leading actor, Rudolph Schildkraut, had been fined. As recently as 1933 his trilogy *Three Cities* had been on the best-seller lists.

The truth is that Sholem Asch had adopted America but America had not adopted Asch. Even today, when he is well known, that event has not occurred. He is in no anthology of American literature, and, when our prominent writers are enumerated, his name is never mentioned. This, despite such facts as his established residence here in 1910, his nat-

uralization in 1920, and the composition of all his important works, save possibly his early plays, in this country. Lest it be hastily concluded that Asch's race and language are responsible, it should be pointed out, first, that we have never accepted as a contributor to our culture a man who has not written in our language. Crèvecoeur might seem an exception, but his *Letters from an American Farmer* were originally issued in English. Ludwig Lewisohn campaigned for Franz Daniel Pastorius without effect, as did Grace King for Charles Étienne Gayarré, and Albert Faust for Charles Sealsfield. Second, although America clings to her expatriates—her Jameses, her Eliots, and her Pounds—she does not accept her literary *immigrés*. A little cordiality might have made Rudyard Kipling an American writer; Molnar, Werfel, and Auden, whose residence here runs into years and in one instance includes citizenship, have not been welcomed to the ranks of our authors. Hospice is not literary acceptance, and the curious reserve which extends the one and denies the other is folkish and provincial. Last refuge for free and creative minds, America conceivably may become the nurse of homeless genius when she becomes cosmopolitan enough to accept as her own the out-

¹ Washington Square College of Arts and Sciences, New York University; editor, Whitman's *The Wound-Dresser* and *Leaves of Grass*.

cast children of Zagreb, Orel, and Mozhaisk.

If, as we become more cosmopolitan, we cling to the epithet "American" for our literature, the foremost nominee for adoption should be Sholem Asch. Born in Kutno, Poland, on November 1, 1880, Sholem was tenth among the fifteen children of Moishe and Malka Asch. Despite this heavy family burden, Moishe Asch, a small businessman, found the means to send this especially quick, bright-eyed boy irregularly to Hebrew schools and eventually to a rabbinical college in Warsaw. But Sholem, despite the strong attraction of religion, had that deeper interest in humanity itself that draws a writer inevitably into his vocation, and long before he was twenty he was making efforts to be published. Reuben Brainnin, the publisher, recalls receiving ungrammatical effusions in Hebrew from Asch when the latter was only sixteen. Shortly after this, however, the would-be author made the acquaintance of Yitzchok Leibush Peretz, to whom he showed verses that he had written in Hebrew. Peretz, who himself had scribbled in Polish and Hebrew before becoming the foremost writer in Yiddish in the world, asked Asch to produce some of the writings which the latter confessed to have composed in that tongue. Once Peretz had seen these, he recognized the youth's exceptional gifts and accepted him as a protégé. Aided by his master and his master's friends, Asch began to publish in the Yiddish newspapers of his native land. In 1904 he achieved a genuine success among his own people with *The Little Town*, a picture of a Polish Cranford on the Vistula, though the characters are more robust and certainly more carnal than those in Mrs. Gaskell's story. He repeated his success with *Wealthy Reb Shlome*, the chief interest in which

today lies in the fact that the protagonist was "blown up," in the photographic sense, from Sholem Asch's father. Numerous efforts in dramatic form were climaxed by *The God of Vengeance*, a play in which a Jewish procurer tries in vain to protect his daughter from the influence of the brothel which he maintains. This Yiddish version of *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, played in Warsaw, St. Petersburg, Berlin, and New York, brought world renown to the author. In 1907, the year of the triumph of his play, Asch began a novel on the life of Christ which was to enshrine his conviction that the Jewish and Christian faiths are different expressions of one culture, but lack of preparation forced him to lay aside this work. Thirty years were to be partially consumed in study for it, however, before he issued *The Nazarene* in 1939. Meanwhile, Asch, who had married Matilda Spira in 1901, was asking himself not merely if unhappy Poland, subject to all sorts of terrors since the revolution of 1905 (with which he had been sympathetic), was the best place to write, but if it were the best place to bring up four young children. America, if not the best place, seemed a better one, and he came to this country in the last year of the great migration of the Polish Jews.

Jewish friends had helped Asch to publish in Warsaw; they now helped him in New York. Chief among these new friends was Abraham Cahan, editor of the *Jewish Daily Forward*. Cahan, later known to English readers for *The Rise of David Levinsky* (1917), a memorable picture of East Side life, had long since inaugurated the policy of printing the best Yiddish poetry and Yiddish fiction in his newspaper with the object of raising the level of appreciation among his readers. This policy and Cahan's long term of editorship worked to Sholem Asch's advan-

tage. Two efforts were made to popularize Asch with English readers—one in 1918 and another in 1930—before *Three Cities* was successfully promoted in 1933; had he had to wait for these, he would have had a very sorry time of it. But Cahan bought and serialized a story of an immigrant's impressions of this country, entitled *To America*, in 1911, the year after Asch's arrival. In regular sequence thereafter Asch's novels appeared in the *Forward*—a fact that guaranteed the novelist not only a good income but the largest single audience that he could get in Yiddish, upward of a quarter of a million readers. Popularity achieved through the *Forward* led to his newspaper serials being published at the close of their runs in book form in Yiddish and German. In this form his sales abroad outdistanced his sales in America.

II

The works of Sholem Asch fall conveniently into three categories: (1) plays, short stories, and novels on the lot of the Jew in Europe; (2) short stories and novels on Jewish life in New York City; and (3) tracts and a fictional trilogy to establish the common cultural and moral matrix of the Jewish and Christian faiths. The only book that will not yield to this patterning is *Song of the Valley* (1939), which tells of the heartbreaking struggle of a band of pioneers, largely Muscovite Jews, to drain a portion of the great Jordan swamp in Palestine and to establish a community there. Asch is not a propagandist for Zionism in this slight novel; on the contrary, his objectivity is notable and suggests a sympathy for those already committed to the movement rather than a desire to make converts. The heat and muck, the flies and fever, the discomfort and suffering, as he describes them, are not inducements to

enlistment. When one recalls the importunate Zionist campaigns in New York in the late thirties, it is obvious that *Song of the Valley* was no mere excursion; it was a compulsive novel in the psychoanalyst's sense.

Of the works in English with a European setting, aside from *The God of Vengeance*, at which we have already glanced, *Mottke the Thief*, *Salvation*, *Three Cities*, and *The War Goes On* appear to be the most rewarding for the American reader. Originally a novel in Yiddish, *Mottke the Thief* (1916) was transformed into a play by its author to become his second best production in this genre. The thief, a man of no squeamishness or scruples, falling in with a troupe of vagabond entertainers, takes a great fancy to Marie, the rope dancer, who, however, has another admirer in Kanarik, a panderer. Mottke slays this man and elopes with Marie to Warsaw. Armed with Kanarik's passport, Mottke himself becomes a panderer with a string of girls and assumes something of the character of Kanarik. Transformed, however, by a new love for a pure young woman, Mottke sells his girls and finds honest employment, only to be picked up by the police who have trailed him for his crime. Notable for its picture of the Warsaw slums, *Mottke the Thief* raised some indignation among the Jews because of the portrayal of its protagonist. It was contended that no Jew could be like Mottke or, for that matter, like Yekel, the father in *The God of Vengeance*. Asch has never commented on the relative amount of villainy among his people, but he has always found scoundrels enough to counterpoise his better motivated characters, and he has not hesitated to use them. This was one of his special merits as a writer when he was addressing only a

Jewish audience. In this sense he is almost as anti-Semitic as Shakespeare.

Salvation (1934) contains one of Asch's best character studies, that of the holy Jew, Jechiel, rabbi of the Psalm Fellowship. The story is set in Poland and covers approximately the middle fifty years of the nineteenth century. Father and older brother belong to the Chassidim sect and have pledged their lives to the study of the Law, while it is the accepted thing for the mother to struggle in the market place, where she has a stall, for their support. Jechiel is also to be dedicated to the male vocation, until his unfitness is definitely established. He roves in the fields and woods, and gets lost, like a normal boy; he helps his mother with her heavy bundles at the market—he does this so often during her illness (while the others are away studying under a famous rabbi) that he falls behind in his Talmud lessons and is expelled from school. Though to his young mind kindlier answers have already been suggested to the problems of life than those given by the Chassidim, he never doubts that a spiritual vocation is the only proper calling for a Jewish boy; and, forced to take his mother's place as her condition becomes graver, he is exalted by admission into a "Psalm Fellowship," composed of workers who meet after hours to study the Psalms. Pinched by his own poverty, Jechiel nevertheless now begins those acts of simple charity that win him the love of the common people and mark him off from the holy ones among the Chassidim, whose purity is maintained by the exalted aloofness of their contemplation of God. Going to fetch his father back so that he may say farewell to his wife on her deathbed, Jechiel meets a notable example of the latter in Rabbi Mendele, whom Asch draws with horribly deft touches; when the father at last

dares to ask this teacher for permission to depart, his wife is dead.

Jechiel, following his mother's death, becomes the tutor of the children of an innkeeper in a distant place. Here his reputation for holiness increases and here he marries Reisel, the handsome daughter. Sent away to study, he returns on one occasion to find the inn in terror, two armed Polish noblemen hammering at the door of his wife's bedroom. His father-in-law has been floored by the drunken scoundrels, and all that Jechiel can interpose is prayer. But when the door is burst open, Reisel is gone through a window, aided by an old Catholic whom Jechiel had befriended, and help arrives in the form of the irascible and unpredictable local count. Because Reisel's escape is elaborated into an answer to his prayer by the common people, his reputation for the miraculous increases, and he is always beset by petitioners to whom he attempts to give spiritual consolation and sane advice. Yielding on one occasion to a reformed sinner who is childless, Jechiel impulsively promises the man a child; it is for this, he believes, that God takes his own child and wife from him, for Reisel dies in childbirth. Wandering in sorrow, he is overtaken by the news that his prophecy has been fulfilled—his petitioner has a daughter whom, in gratitude, he has named Reisel. Eighteen years pass, filled with service on Jechiel's part, during which the girl Reisel becomes a most desirable woman. But to the horror of the Jewish community she becomes infatuated with a young Catholic and enters a convent to study in order that she may wed him. Confirmation never occurs: Jechiel bids the girl's mother post herself in view of the convent, and he prays for the girl's death, with the result that before dawn Reisel casts herself from her window to

die on the pavement below—a Jewess. But an awful knowledge comes to Jechiel that he has sinned again: he has forced a life out of this world into the next, and he must atone with his own. A long sickness comes to him and finally death.

Beautifully patterned with its two Reisels and its duplicate window episodes, equally capable of mystical or realistic interpretation, minutely detailed in all respects, alive with a score of vivid characters, and unified by the ever fine presence of Jechiel, whose self-scanning is microscopic but never unwholesome, *Salvation* is one of Sholem Asch's finest novels, and one of the few convincing pictures of a truly religious person in fiction.

Three Cities (a trilogy composed of *Petersburg*, *Warsaw*, and *Moscow*) has not the tightness and good design of *Salvation*. One character, Zachary Mirkin, supplies a sort of unity, since he is the focal character in the work; but he is a rather weak young man of good will, whose intellectual meanderings are somewhat less interesting than his physical. We meet him as the troubled suitor of Nina Halperin, the spoiled daughter of a too-successful advocate; then he becomes secretly entangled with Nina's mama, while his own father, a widower, makes off with Nina. Fleeing from the capital, Zachary finds a kind of existence as a small angel in a revolutionary family in Warsaw's ghetto, but his heart is fluttered by Helene, a simple, nonrevolutionary school teacher. Nevertheless, he is back in Russia, leader of a machine-gun squad placed on top of the theater above Theatre Square, in Moscow, in the battle in which the Reds take over the city. For a while Zachary is all Bolshevik, but over the weeks and months come slow disillusionment, physical and spiritual sickness, and lucky escape back to Helene in

Warsaw. Asch has done better elsewhere with his ghetto, but his pictures of pre-revolutionary St. Petersburg, with its sycophancy and its loose morality, and of revolutionary Moscow, with its calculated crime in the name of the proletariat, are memorable. Zachary's father, the multimillionaire Gabriel Mirkin, and the irrepressible posturer Solomon Ossipovitch Halperin are triumphs of characterization, but when Sholem Asch tries to give us the reflections of Lenin before the adoption of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, and has him troubled in conscience about his fundamental beliefs, the novelist is far more innocent than Lewis Carroll's Alice.

Though a poorly titled novel in English, *The War Goes On* (1936) is quite the equal of *Three Cities* as literature and is an excellent study of Germany during the period of inflation that preceded Hitler's rise to power. Two stories are intertwined in the narrative: the first, that of two Russian brothers, the one, Aron, a refugee who profits out of falling marks until he is finally ruined by "the man with the black beard" who ruins all Germany, and the other, Misha, a Bolshevik who becomes a member of a Soviet delegation to Germany and representative of "a new Breed of Jews"; and the second, the story of Hans Bodenheimer and Lotte von Sticker, who have the indecency, after being barred from their respective homes, to elope, though he is part Jew and she pure Aryan. Her fanatical brother, a pre-Hitler Hitlerite, finds his sister, however, when she is far gone with child and does his duty to the Fatherland by shooting her in the belly. This is merely the bloodiest figure in the many-figured carpet which Asch gives us: all spell, with no Jamesian obscurity, horror and torture, the befoulement of persons and the corruption of souls.

III

Sholem Asch's *Uncle Moses* (1916) belongs to a further past, probably, than does his novel *Salvation*, for the relations between men in the latter novel are such as are always being resumed, whereas those that existed between Moses Melnik and the men who worked for him belonged to a special era and a brief one in our history, now closed forever. Melnik was "Uncle Moses" because he was the friend and patron of every Jew who arrived in New York from Kusmin, Poland, and who regularly began his career in Uncle Moses' clothing establishment, for Melnik preferred workers from no other town or district but his own. He was by turns a humorous and tyrannical overlord, a kindly man, but one who would brook no opposition. In the course of the story he buys a young bride, who sees what her refusal will mean to her family, but who cannot give him her love, though she gives him a son. Mascha tries to help out the strike leader who at last breaks the hold Melnik has over his workers, but her aid is rejected, and she and Moses go back to a lonely life together, despite the child. Asch had the materials here for a better story than he has written: it is necessary to make Uncle Moses even more of a dated figure than he does; it is necessary for us to see more of the man's own struggles and kindnesses, if we are to feel the pathos of his position. As it is, *Uncle Moses* is now chiefly useful as a historical document of the era when *Landsmann* organizations flourished. In this book all the Kusminites cleave together; Uncles Moses even furthers this by promising them a prayer-house of their own. They make a society resistant to the New World and more readily exploited by it.

If pathos is inadequately worked up in *Uncle Moses*, it is troweled on in *Chaim Lederer's Return* (1919) and in *Judge Not*

(1923). The first shows an old man shoved aside in the factory he helped to create and in the home to which his money had given distinction. When he attempts to reassert himself, he is defeated; a calloused family does not care when he disappears, possibly to begin in some distant place as a worker again. In *Judge Not* Max Stone is convicted of murder when he might have escaped on a manslaughter charge had his wife been willing to testify for him, but she wishes him out of the way, since she has a lover. Stone's own silence is a little superhuman. Asch makes far better use of the emotions in *The Mother* (1925), a story in which the poor, hard-worked daughter of a Jewish family, after a brief fling in which she is the childless mistress of a young sculptor, gives him up to a woman of another faith—a woman with beauty, and culture, and money—and returns to the drudgery to which, it seems, from birth she has been fated. *The Mother* is one of the author's better novels. Dvoyrelè, the heroine and model for her lover's masterpiece "*The Mother*," is drawn with great sympathy, and only a gentle irony plays over the unfitness of her father—who had been glorious at cantillating the Book of Esther in Poland. Bucholz, the sculptor, is the acme of Bohemian selfishness.

Unless he surpasses it with another, *East River* (1946) will probably be regarded as Sholem Asch's best book with New York as its locale. It is the story of two Jewish families, the Greenstocks and the Davidowskys, whose plans to unite their offspring are upset by the infatuation of the Davidowsky boys, Nathan and Irving, with Mary McCarthy, the daughter of a drunken Roman Catholic and Jew-baiter. Nathan's love for Mary is cleverly used by his shrewd doctor to arouse his will after he has fallen into terrible apathy from an attack of polio. His brother Irving, now rising rapidly in

business, finances his slow rehabilitation. Irving's success in the dressmaking trade is partially due to his abilities but it is also due to a loan from Rachel Greenstock's uncle, on the assumption that Irving will wed Rachel. More deeply interested in Mary, who has become a dress model for him, Irving procrastinates until the two families force the announcement of the engagement. But on the advice of Nathan, Irving does not appear on Rachel's wedding day, but is wed in a civil ceremony to Mary, whom he has got pregnant. All sorts of difficulties ensue, of course, and when Mary, contrary to her promise, impulsively gets her child baptized, Nathan leaves her to resume attentions to Rachel. She, however, has found a better mate in a young intellectual and is now bored by Irving's talk of business. Trouble in the Davidowsky house brings Mary home with her child, and she and Irving are reunited. The story is told against an extraordinarily rich background of East Side life; the incidental episodes range from an amusing rooftop roundup of mating pigeons to the Triangle Shirtwaist fire; and a great variety of characters, clearly delineated, swarm the pages—the presence of the improvident and devout grocer, Moshe Wolf Davidowsky, one of the outstanding figures among Sholem Asch's many fine portraits of old men, lingers after the reader is done with the book. But despite its many excellencies, *East River* is not quite a convincing novel. The reader gets a blurred vision of Mary; the reasons for her return to her husband, the quality of that attraction, remain obscure.

IV

Greatly preoccupied with religion in an irreverent, if not irreligious age, Sholem Asch kept in reserve a major project to crown his career—the recon-

ciliation of the Christians and the Jews. It is necessary to understand that this project does not involve a theological reconciliation; reviewing Asch's *One Destiny: An Epistle to the Christians* (1945), a book provoked by the struggle against Hitler, a Jewish critic noted with relief that the title was "One Destiny," not "One Faith." Asch himself says emphatically in *What I Believe* (1941), "I do not believe that by trading a few dogmas in our faiths we shall reach a better understanding between Christians and Jews." For a true reconciliation of Jew and Christian means a mutual understanding and regard for each other's faith and for the common moral good these faiths have created in the world.

It should be understood, then, that the primary object which Asch had in view in writing *The Nazarene* (1939), *The Apostle* (1943), and *Mary* (1949) was to pay reverence to the goodness in Christianity, not to subscribe to it or to settle theological questions. And, because this was his purpose, he may be suspected of another subordinate but equally valid purpose, that is, to show how much of the Christian faith is derived from the Hebrew, from Hebrew law and Hebrew living; for Jesus was a Jew with Jewish parents, relatives, associates, and disciples—all channels for the religion and culture in which he was bred. Being not less, but more, sensitive than other Jewish boys, he became a repository for the best that was said and thought in the world in his time and the transmitter of that best to the Western world.

Following the Gospels closely, save that Asch provides Jesus with four brothers and a sister, he gives us a minutely detailed picture of the life and times of Jesus in *The Nazarene*, *The Apostle*, and *Mary*, but he is no naturalist in the sense that Zola is a naturalist. He accepts annunciations, revelations, and miracles,

because the majority of Christians accept them—they are a part of *their* faith. Hence no one can object that Jesus, as Asch draws him, is not divinely appointed—the Messiah of the Christians. Yet adherence to the Gospels does not limit the imagination, which displays itself in two ways: in the poetry of the scenes of spiritual rapture and in the invention of nonbiblical characters, like Taddi, the tanner, simple friend of Joseph and later follower of Jesus.

Inevitably these books—"the Gospel according to St. Sholem," in the view of one hostile critic—have stirred up controversy. Our concern here is their value as literature, for there are some who would hold that books so dedicated ought not to be considered literature at all. The issue can be sharpened as to whether or not a historical novel is literature and, once so sharpened, disappears. The thing to perceive is the complete objectivity of the narrator and his ripeness, so far as historical materials are concerned, for his task. The consequence

is that the trilogy must be ranked among Asch's chief accomplishments, though no one book in it is as fervent as *Salvation*, in which the author *does* commit himself. *The Nazarene* is the best, with an ingenious framework and a fascinating background. Some few passages in it are just a little slick, like those in a Lanny Budd novel. By contrast, *The Apostle*, which centers on the life of Paul, seems somewhat labored and dull. The novel *Mary*, dealing chiefly with her son, is admirable in its treatment of the boyhood of Jesus, after which the author plainly tired and skipped to the climactic scenes of his life. But the trilogy may be read by either Jew or Christian with profit—and with no damage to his faith.

Asch's latest excursion, however, if it has increased his sales, has not diminished his isolation. He is still an *immigré* writer, a man without a country—only now there are Jews and Christians who have got him mixed up with Mephistopheles.

The Meaning of Thomas More's "Utopia"

GEORGE SANDERLIN¹

WHAT is the meaning of Thomas More's *Utopia*? Is it a "mirror for princes" for Henry VIII, corresponding to the *Institutio principis Christiani* which Erasmus wrote for Charles V? Is it a subtle exhortation to the sixteenth-century proletariat to revolt—they have nothing to lose but their blue apprentice coats? Is it a defense of medieval collectivism against the new commercialism? A defiance to the decaying feudal order

on behalf of the London bourgeois? A reasoned rejection of state socialism? A literary joke?

Learned names stand behind each of these theories, and the list of hypotheses above is by no means complete. A vital literary work comes into the world pregnant with meaning, particularly an imaginative work like the *Utopia*, concerned with the presentation of ideas. A critic may make a purely personal interpretation, like H. G. Wells's contemptuous denunciation of Utopian "Whiggism": most, however, have relied upon

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apt comparison with such writers as Augustine, Plato, Erasmus, and upon reconstruction of the religious, economic, and social backgrounds of More's period. In fact, there has been so much emphasis upon the social content of the *Utopia* that the Congressional Library classifies it under "Social Sciences."

Certainly, *Utopia* is a work of ideas. But what gives it its rich complexity, its fascination for the ages since More and for today, is its indirect, imaginative presentation of these ideas. In spite of W. E. Campbell's interesting comparison of the method of *Utopia* to the method of scholastic disputation, *Utopia* is not a systematic exposition of doctrine comparable to Aquinas' *Summa theologica*. It is not a treatise on communism or socialism. It is a reflection of More's world, a drama of More's mind; in Sidney's sense of the word, it is "poetry."

The problem of the meaning of *Utopia* is the same as the problem of the meaning of *Hamlet*. That is, it is just as complex, it requires the same imaginative sympathy on the part of the critic. And, in the end, the critic's chief function is to remove road blocks for the reader and let *Utopia* speak for itself.

This literary quality of *Utopia* was recognized in More's own century to a greater extent than it has been since. Erasmus, it is true, assigned a political purpose to More: to show whence spring the evils of states, with special reference to the English state. But, of course, Spenser's *Faerie Queene* also had a political motive: to glorify Queen Elizabeth and the Tudor line, as did many other serious poetical works of the time. In general, the sixteenth century agreed with Sidney that *Utopia* was poetry teaching by example. That is, Sidney mentions *Utopia* as an illustration of true or "right" poetry, imitative poetry with a moral. Wilson in his *Art of*

Rhetoric classes it under the fable or "feigned matter," along with Lucian; and Puttenham in the *Art of English Poesie* considers it a historical poem in which the history is invented.

In other words, *Utopia* is imaginative literature, fiction—an early novel without much plot, if you will. The "story" is inclosed in an elaborate frame—More's meeting and conversation with the narrator, Hythlodaye—and in place of a plot the reader is conducted to an ideal state. Of course, the frame consists in part of a dialogue between More and Hythlodaye, and if one wishes to depreciate the account of the ideal state he may emphasize that introductory part, as W. E. Campbell has done. Campbell argues that More's views are always given in his own person, that More disagrees with many, if not most, of Hythlodaye's ideas about Utopia, that the work is in form a dialogue and not fiction. This would tend to make Hythlodaye into the kind of straw man that Socrates is always neatly disposing of in the dialogues of Plato. But, clearly, this is not Hythlodaye's role. The character "More" in the *Utopia* shows great respect for Hythlodaye and in fact resolutely disagrees with him only on the question of whether a philosopher should enter the king's service. This, we know, was a question close to More's heart at the time, for he was debating with himself whether or not to enter King Henry VIII's service. The fact that the side of him which favored such a step eventually won out is no reason for supposing that More did not seriously weigh the arguments on the other side.

As for the remark of the character "More" at the end of Book II, where the frame is closed, that "many things came to my mind which in the manners and laws of that people seemed to be instituted and founded of no good reason . . .

chiefly, in the community of their life"—as for this "rejection" of communism, surely the conclusion of the sentence shows that More is being half-ironical: "by the which thing only all nobility, magnificence, worship, honor and majesty, the true ornaments and honors, *as the common opinion is*, of a commonwealth utterly be overthrown and destroyed" (italics added). Throughout Book II More has been slyly jolting the reader into a realization that the things valued by the "common opinion" of Europe, such as gold, are by no means as worth while as hitherto thought. If More truly intended the *Utopia* as a refutation of communism, the part of the character "More" would have had to be considerably expanded. Plato not only allows Socrates the *last* word but, by a good safe margin, the *most* words.

No, *Utopia* is a story, the free play of a creative writer's imagination. It is a drama of Thomas More's mind, in which, following his favorite patristic author, Augustine, he measures earthly states against a divine standard and finds them wanting. The most powerful sentences in the *Utopia* are not the character "More"'s casual, half-ironical comment quoted above on communism but Hythlodaye's passionate summation: "Therefore when I consider and weigh in my mind all these commonwealths which nowadays anywhere do flourish, so God help me, I can perceive nothing but a certain conspiracy of rich men, procuring their own commodities under the name and title of the commonwealth." This echoes Augustine's, "Take away justice, and what are earthly states but great bands of robbers?" and his eloquent denunciation of the cruelty and bloodshed accompanying even the establishment of the greatest and most just earthly state, the Roman Empire.

True, the divine standard is only implied. But it is there, in the religious faith of the Utopians in a God who is one, omnipotent, omnipresent, all-good—in a word, the Christian God. Utopia, which exists "nowhere," is the creation of human reason enlightened by an imperfect knowledge of God and of human will more than normally effective. For purposes of satire, as Chambers has pointed out, the Utopians live up to their partially clouded ideals in such a way as to place them morally far above the Europeans who profess an even higher code. They have a severely limited divorce—but practically no adultery. They have an Epicurean philosophy—but no gambling or carousing. Here, of course, lies one of the great cruxes of *Utopia*: is More recommending a lower standard along with the admirable cheerfulness and discipline of the Utopians?

Kautsky, Ames, the "progressives" among the scholars, would say "Yes." May we ask, in turn: "Would Shakespeare recommend that all fathers retire to an island and bring up their daughters in the fashion that Prospero used with Miranda in *The Tempest*?" If we are willing to accept the fantasy in *The Tempest* as a blueprint for child education, then we may tie ourselves to the same literal acceptance of the *Utopia*. Each writer has the same problem—to present, imaginatively, what would happen under the conditions of his "plot." There are excellent suggestions in *The Tempest*, and even more in the *Utopia*, but neither is an exposition of doctrine. More is simply taking a society of wise pagans in the New World and imagining what, under certain conditions, they might attain to.

Utopia is a joyous work. It was written in the springtime of Thomas More's life and hopes. Thomas More has great

sympathy for this most perfect, though imperfect, of earthly societies and would gladly see many of their reforms adopted in Europe. When Hythlodaeus has completed his detailed account, Thomas More takes him by the hand and leads him courteously in to supper—and then the tone changes.

"In the mean time, as I can not agree and consent to all things that he said, being else without doubt a man singularly well learned and also in all worldly matters exactly and profoundly experienced," More writes, "*so must I needs confess and grant, that many things be in the Utopian weal public, which in our cities I may rather wish for than hope after.*"

And this is not More's rejection of Utopia; it is human nature's. More does not fear, with our modern delicacy, that Utopia is too true to be good; he knows, in his heart, that it is too good to be true. For, if men are builders, as More has

portrayed them in *Utopia*, they are also destroyers—the most terrible on earth. In this world there is war, which More and the Utopians hate, and there is suffering, which More accepts. More will go forward, under Henry VIII, to strive with all his might for a policy of peace, for an amelioration of the conditions under which men live, for the golden age to which the humanists looked; and already he knows, with the same certainty with which he is aware of the hair shirt beneath his sheriff's gown, that he and they are doomed to fail.

This underlying sense of man's tragedy, this age-old wisdom of Christianity, is what makes *Utopia* a living work of art, the most vital of the "Utopias" today, after so many less deeply grounded imitations have flourished and faded. Man's lot is to try and to fail—"and with God be the rest." And so Thomas More leaves it.

Conrad Richter's Pioneers: Reality and Myth

FREDERIC I. CARPENTER¹

DURING the last two decades Conrad Richter has published a series of stories and novels recalling to vivid life the adventures and feelings of the American pioneers. *The Sea of Grass* told of the disintegration of a cattleman's kingdom in the early Southwest, and it achieved fame: it was chosen as the first of an anthology of *Great Short Novels* (edited by Edward Weeks) and was made into an excellent moving picture. In 1940 *The Trees* described even more vividly the lives of a family of the earliest settlers of

the Ohio Valley. In 1946 *The Fields* and in 1950 *The Town* carried this story to its conclusion in the Civil War and the end of the pioneering era. Between these four novels other successful stories of other pioneers appeared; but these are the best, and *The Town* completes a cycle. Since its publication also marks the author's sixtieth birthday, it is time to take stock of his achievement.

The only novelist with whom Conrad Richter can well be compared is Willa Cather, whose pioneer heroes and heroines, like his, came from both Middle West and Southwest and whose tales, like his, were told with a kind of classic

¹ Formerly University of California; resigned in protest at dismissal of professors who did not sign the non-Communist oath.

restraint. But Richter belongs to a later generation, which both sees the pioneers from a longer perspective and (paradoxically) enters into their lives with a greater emotional immediacy. Between the generations of Willa Cather and of Conrad Richter a myth has begun to form, and this myth has worked to deepen and (in some ways) to distort the tales of the contemporary writer. Between the direct clarity of *O Pioneers!* and the plotted complexity of *The Town* the generation of Freud and Sherwood Anderson has intervened, with its rediscovery of Melville and the symbolic method.

But Richter has usually been called a simple realist, and all his tales have genuinely been characterized by a careful artistry, a classical condensation, and an emotional restraint. *The Sea of Grass* was a perfect short novel, with hardly a word wasted, and *The Trees* ran but little longer. All these pioneer novels have been packed with homely, realistic detail resulting from the author's lifelong absorption in the folk tales, newspaper accounts, diaries, and historical records of an earlier age. Not only external details but the very language and style of his writing have been authentically and consciously early American. By contrast, his symbols have never been explicit and his myth may perhaps be subconscious. But in his last book this myth has become increasingly dominant, and it distinguishes all his best novels from the more purely realistic pioneer tales of Willa Cather and (more recently) of A. B. Guthrie, Jr. It is this myth of the making of America which I shall emphasize, illustrating it chiefly from his recent trilogy describing the settlement of the imaginary town of "Americus," Ohio.

Two salient facts of Conrad Richter's literary biography help to emphasize and to explain this myth. His father was a

preacher in western Pennsylvania, where he himself lived for thirty-eight years, following a variety of jobs, including journalism. At the age of twenty-three his first story, "Brothers of No Kin," was chosen by E. J. O'Brien as the "best" of the year. But his serious fiction could not support his family, and his literary efforts during the next two decades divided between slick-magazine fiction and three ambitious, nonfiction books, written in deadly earnest, entitled *Human Vibration*, *Life Energy*, and *Principles in Bio-physics*. In these he sought to analyze the secret and pattern of human life and to reduce it to a series of symbolic propositions. Of course, these failed and might well be forgotten, but they make clear that his mind has always sought to analyze and to explain human phenomena through conscious symbols and that he has always rejected the simple philosophy of mechanistic naturalism. "Contrary to Crile and a few others," he wrote in *Principles of Bio-physics*,² "I have found no evidence for a mechanistic doctrine."

Then, in 1928, Richter moved to New Mexico, believing that early nineteenth-century life in the Southwest was analogous to seventeenth-century life in his native Pennsylvania and Ohio. Soon he published a series of short stories about this early Southwest—later collected as *Early Americana* (1936)—then *The Sea of Grass*, followed by *Tacey Cromwell* (1942). All these stories are interesting and vivid. Typically, *Tacey Cromwell* tells realistically of a prostitute and a gambler (like the pair who sacrificed

² Published by Good Books Corporation, Harrisburg, Pa., 1927. The best critical discussion of his early work is by Bruce Sutherland in *New Mexico Quarterly Review*, XV (winter, 1945), 413–22, which somewhat overemphasizes Richter's realism and also his "assumption that man is the most perfect of all mechanical creations."

themselves for "The Outcasts of Poker Flat," in the old romantic story by Bret Harte), who now, in a later period, "attempt to cross the great divide into the land of respectability."³ But all these tales of the Southwest are characterized by a clear objectivity and a fairly simple realism. Perhaps the open ranges of the West lent their clarity to these tales, in contrast to the haze of the Ohio river bottoms. Or perhaps Richter was observing this Southwest more directly, instead of "remembering" his earlier Ohio pioneers through the imaginative haze of distance and legend.

Certainly *The Sea of Grass* is the best of these western tales and may be the best of all his novels. Essentially it is a swift-moving story told simply but in the words of a highly educated young man who observes its events. These spoken words retain the rich idiom and imagery of the pioneer West: "with the range already greening up in the sloughs, with Canada geese rising from the ponds and cutting the sky like joined Apache lances." The inward feeling of the former days is reproduced, as well as the outward events. And the title itself becomes symbolic of all the westward pioneers whose prairie schooners sailed the sea of grass as the old clipper ships sailed the actual ocean. The metaphor is repeated throughout the book: "I saw that the landlocked harbor of the square was taut and white with the crowded canvas of settlers' wagons." And frequently this symbolic quality is explicitly suggested, as by the description of a "vast, almost mythical herd.... The free wild life we lived on that shaggy prairie was to me the life of the gods." Like Willa Cather, Conrad Richter was consciously attempting "to lead down the muses" to

this wild American land. But the narrative remains simple and direct and the symbol incidental.

Three years later, in *The Trees*, Richter changed the locale from his adopted Southwest to his native Middle West, changed the time from the early nineteenth century to the late seventeenth and, most important, changed the mood and the symbols from the open sea of grass to the shut-in world of the "woodsies," living beneath the shadow of the primeval "trees." The first sentence of the new novel seems to repeat the metaphor of its predecessor: "They moved along in the bobbing, springy gait of a family that followed the woods as some families follow the sea." And the first "vision" of the West from the top of the Alleghenies is of "a sea of solid tree-tops broken only by some gash where deep beneath the foliage an unknown stream made its way." But as this pioneer family plunges down beneath this sea of treetops, it enters a strange "dark country" submerged under "that ocean of leaves." From the sunlit surface of the southwestern sea of grass, Richter's Ohio pioneers enter a strange, dark, green, subsurface—sometimes subconscious and sometimes almost subhuman—world of primeval, uncivilized wilderness. This strange sea change gives his trilogy of the Ohio pioneers a quality unique in American literature.

Of course, *The Trees* can be read with enjoyment merely on the level of surface realism. It tells the common story of the typical pioneer family—of Worth Luckett, the "woodsy" and born hunter; of his wife Jary, who was never meant to be a pioneer and died of woods fever at thirty-seven; and of Sayward, the oldest daughter, who becomes of necessity a mother to her three young sisters and her brother. It tells of their building a cabin,

³ I quote the excellent characterization by Bruce Sutherland.

of Indian visitors, of the coming of neighbors, of a trading post where Indians get drunk, of the marriage of one younger sister to a "white Indian" who later deserts her, and of the wandering-away and loss of the youngest sister in the woods; it tells how the "woodsy" father finally leaves his family to hunt buffalo in the West and of Sayward's marriage to a Bay State lawyer who earlier had run away from his eastern home and had become a "solitary" in the Ohio woods. It ends with the clearing of a farm site by this new couple and their neighbors.

But the surface events are not so memorable as their impact on the minds of these pioneers—and of the reader: "A man's mind had stranger and darker ways than a beast in the woods. You could poultice a body wound or a snake-bite and it would draw the poison out. But try and do that to a woodsy's mind and you only drove it in." The wilderness of trees produces a wildness of the mind. Like the brutal Jake Tench, who skinned a captive wolf alive, and "like some red beast out of one of Sulie's nightmares, it ran across the clearing with the squaws and young ones screeching after." Or when sister Genny was deserted by her woodsy husband and went half-crazy living alone in her isolated cabin, so that when her brother came searching for her, "she came up to Wyitt and peered at him as if half blind from living in a dark world."

This dark world beneath the shadow of the trees, with the darkness it produces in the minds of the characters, is the true theme of the novel. Moreover, it determines the plotting also: the tale begins with the Luckett family plunging down into the sea of treetops, and the final chapters tell of Sayward and Wyitt leading their half-crazed sister Genny back to civilization: "Never had it felt so good

at last to see a cloud of white shining ahead through the dark trees." Finally, when Sayward has married her runaway lawyer, Portius Wheeler, and has saved him from this same wildness: "It seemed she stood high above the trees and could look out over a vasty sea of leaves."

This novel, told on the level of concrete reality, thus becomes also a kind of symbolic tale of the American racial unconscious, in which the mythical pioneer reverts to savagery, both in action and in thought, in order to deal with the savagery of the wilderness. It describes the death of a part of the old civilization in this wilderness, the painful survival of another part, and the rebirth of a new, frontier civilization with the clearing-away of the trees and the settlement of the new land. On the level of myth and symbol the novel suggests the dark night of the soul which accompanied the racial experience of Americans, almost unique in the history of civilization, and the gradual "illumination" which followed.

The Fields and *The Town* continue both the realistic story and the imaginative myth. On the level of realism these novels describe the gradual growth of the family of Portius Wheeler, frontier lawyer, and of Sayward Luckett Wheeler, his wife, with their nine children, until at last the father and mother die and the youngest child reaches maturity. And they describe the gradual growth of the community in which they live from a scattered group of frontier homesteads to an incorporated town, which itself is finally incorporated into an industrial America by the arrival of the new railroad and telegraph. All the external events are narrated in realistic detail, from the first baptism and "taxing" to the return of the youngest son to the deathbed of his mother—the last of the pioneers.

The plot of these novels is realistic but

complex and suggests something more than a surface realism. Briefly, Portius and Sayward Wheeler have eight children, but after the eighth the ill wife withdraws from marital relations and the husband turns to the new young schoolmistress, who has a girl child named Rosa. But Sayward hastily accepts her husband back, and a last child, "Chancey" Wheeler, is born. Meanwhile the schoolteacher is married off to Portius Wheeler's disreputable old crony, Jake Tench, and Rosa grows up as one of their slovenly household. The last half of *The Town* describes poignantly the fore-fated romance of the rebellious young Chancey Wheeler with his half-sister Rosa—a romance which ends inevitably with her suicide after Chancey, who has been told the truth, breaks off the relationship. Meanwhile the other eight Wheeler children grow up, the town grows up, and the nation of which it is a part grows up toward maturity. Against this background of history the individual characters are born, live, prosper, suffer, and die.

Ultimately, of course, the characters make the novel, and this trilogy contains characters as interesting as any others in American fiction. Sayward Luckett Wheeler is central, and the story is told in her idiom—although never in the first person. Moreover, she dominates the action and becomes (if usually indirectly through her husband) the leader of the town's affairs. Finally, her pioneer values also dominate the book. Yet she is only superficially like the simple pioneer woman whose statue stands in hundreds of American town squares from Ohio to Oregon—or like the Lucinda Matlock of Spoon River who "at ninety-six had lived enough, that is all, / And passed to a sweet repose." Sayward Wheeler is more complex and less lovely: she has inherited Indian blood from her "woodsy"

father and is often cruel, she has the wilful self-reliance of the uneducated pioneer and is not always enlightened, and she sometimes tries to dominate both husband and children and does alienate her youngest boy, Chancey—although on her deathbed he comes to doubt the justice of his own revolt.

The husband and frontier lawyer, Portius Wheeler, is probably the most unusual character in the book. A kind of cross between Tom Paine and Abe Lincoln, he has brought from his native Bay State an education, a Yankee shrewdness, and a dry sense of humor; but having run away from his past and gone native, he has acquired a deep sympathy for the underdog, a bitterly agnostic individualism, and a tendency to get drunk. While drunk, he is first married to Sayward and then (in a scene reminiscent of Sherwood Anderson) tries to run away on their wedding night but returns willingly when sober. While drunk, he is passed over for the first judgeship of the new town but is later appointed the second judge. And it is his brief infidelity to his wife that underlies the tragedy of the young Chancey and Rosa. Yet Portius Wheeler is an admirable man, who, with the objective understanding and quiet help of his wife, becomes a leading citizen of the town, even if not a pillar of the church.

Most unusual and most striking is the human relationship of Sayward and Portius Wheeler—a relationship utterly unromantic, yet satisfying and real. Married when drunk, yet consenting when sober, Portius never tells his wife of his own past. Never confessional or even articulate, the two nevertheless understand and value each other, for each embodies the human and social qualities necessary to complement the other. If Sayward is wholly earthy, realistic, and practical, Portius has the education, elo-

quence, and idealism which his wife lacks. Above the level of fictional realism, the strange marriage of these two opposites suggests the strange mixture of pioneer realism with puritan idealism which has gone into the making of America.

Contrasting with these two are the disreputable Jake Tench and the romantic schoolteacher from the East who had been forced to marry him to legitimatize her daughter Rosa. Jake Tench is as authentic as Huck Finn's father, and as subhuman. The name "Tench" (if you look it up in the dictionary) describes "a fresh-water fish, allied to the dace and id, noted for its tenacity of life," and Jake Tench embodies all that is subhuman and merely instinctive in American life. But his wife (who after their marriage neurotically shuts herself up in their cabin) embodies all that is romantic, bookish, and antirealistic in American life. Letting her household deteriorate and her children grow up as they best can, she reads borrowed novels in the half-light of her dirty chimney corner. And in this dark household Rosa Tench grows up.

Rosa is a child who recalls some of the capriciousness of Pearl of *The Scarlet Letter* and some of the wild beauty of Rima of *Green Mansions*. Like Pearl, she is the natural child of sin and of romantic idealism, yet more human and real. And like Rima, she is a lover of the woods and the wild, but also familiar with the slums and the saloons of the town. She has never been told the truth of her inheritance, yet feels that the brutal Jake Tench cannot truly be her father. And when her lover, Chancey, ignobly deserts her for reasons which she cannot understand, she commits suicide by disemboweling herself with an eel-spear, as if trying to exorcise the animal element of her human nature.

Meanwhile, Chancey Wheeler, the

youngest and puniest of the large Wheeler family, has grown up with a feeling of alienation from the hearty life around him. Because of rheumatic fever as a child, he has been babied and spoiled and has retired into a world of his own imagination. As he grows up, he passionately espouses the new social idealism of Robert Owen and preaches pacifism and socialism, attacking the hard realism of his mother and the judicial logic of his father. Yet, when he has been told the truth of his relationship to his half-sister, Rosa, he accepts reality, even if ignobly. And when finally he learns that it is actually his mother who has supported the radical newspaper in which he had attacked her views, he begins to accept the whole truth.

But, again, the relationship of Chancey Wheeler with his half-sister, Rosa Tench, is more interesting than is the character of either one separately. In their story, Richter has treated again the old incest myth that troubled the mind of Melville's *Pierre*, as well as the characters of Robinson Jeffers—but now with a new combination of realism and restraint. Their new relationship is wholly realistic, wholly tragic, and yet wholly beautiful. Their love briefly creates a romantic idyl in contrast to the half-humorous realism of Portius and Sayward Wheeler and the half-brutal degradation of the Tenches. From the time when Chancey and Rosa first wander off from the Fourth-of-July picnic into the deep woods beside the river to the time when the two board a captive balloon for a ride at the Fairgrounds—and Rosa impulsively cuts the anchor rope so that they fly free of earth for a moment but Chancey pulls the ripcord to force them back to earth again—their love remains both reality and myth. As Melville had compared the love of *Pierre* and Isobel to the

mythical marriage of the gods, Coelus and Terra, so here "as the dusk deepened, it was like some mysterious and exquisite mist distilled by the gods to hide the secret and stealthy union of earth and heaven. She and Chancey walked through it tonight as if only half awake. . ." But the romantic idyl cannot last: Chancey accepts the unpleasant reality and lives, but the heavenly Rosa dies.

After the tragedy, Chancey, feeling the need of some religious solace and understanding, first visits the Protestant minister of his mother's church, "but nothing rose to the good doctor's lips save piety and justice and the uncompromising word of God." Next he visits the Catholic Father of the Tenches, but without success. Then his own father takes him to his own courthouse and explains his own humanistic belief in science and the law, but "his father sat there noble and untouched." Only when Chancey happened on some backwoods farmers and the fanatic "Old Johnny" Appleseed babbled about a strange, mystic religion out of Swedenborg's *Heaven and Hell*, was Chancey suddenly moved—but never convinced. At the end, his author leaves him to continue his quest alone.

But meanwhile Conrad Richter not only has created a wealth of pioneer characters, and by their relationships suggested something of the patterns of early American life, but sometimes also has put into their mouths memorable affirmations of the values of that life. In what is perhaps the central scene of the book, the old woodsy grandfather, Worth Luckett, returns from the West to visit his daughter, Sayward, in her new house on the square, and there confronts Portius Wheeler's "bluestocking" sister from Boston.

"Americus must be very grateful to you, Mr. Luckett," she pronounced.

"What fer?" Worth asked suspiciously, looking at her direct for almost the first time.

"Judge Wheeler just told us. For founding such a growing city in a new land."

"I had no idee o' that," Worth told her tartly. "Or I'd never settled here. . . . Town scum . . . stick in one place. They go through the whole rumpus of gettin' born and dyin' and have no idee how the Lord Almighty meant them to live."

Hardly since Thoreau died has the native, "wild" American way of life found so eloquent a spokesman.

And so at the story's end, Richter explicitly sets Worth's grandson by his mother's deathbed:

Again that strange feeling ran over Chancey. Why, she had always claimed how as a girl and young woman she had hated the trees. . . . And yet now all she lived for was the sight and sound of those green leaves moving outside her window. Was there something deeper and more mysterious in his mother's philosophy than he and his generation who knew so much had suspected; something not simple but complex: something which held not only that hardship built happiness but which somehow implied that hate built love; and evil, goodness?

Sometimes embodied only in character and event, sometimes suggested in symbol, rarely explicit, this "something deeper and more mysterious" always gives depth and significance to Conrad Richter's pioneer novels. Sailing the sea of grass in their prairie schooners or plunging beneath the surface of a sea of leaves into the dark wilderness of early Ohio, his pioneers live not only as actual adventurers but also as explorers of the primeval past and the racial unconscious. While they cut down the trees and plow the fields and build the new town, they also remember something of the mythical wisdom of the race—and suggest its continuing value for our times also.

Applications of the Principles of Group Dynamics in the College Classroom¹

HAROLD E. BRIGGS²

I HAVE been asked to report to you on the use made of the principles of group dynamics in the English communication program at the University of Southern California and to attempt an evaluation of our procedures. If I did just this, I would be speaking only of the more unusual features of the program, and I would almost inevitably give you a mistaken idea of what we do and why we do it. So I must point out, in beginning, that our system is in many respects quite traditional. Our students write themes regularly, one a week, and the teachers grade and correct them. The students study such old-fashioned matters as outlining, paragraph construction, and grammar; read selections taken from a book of readings, as well as several classic works of literature; and take difficult examinations, both objective and of the impromptu essay type. Also, I should add that we have worked out our new program over a period of five years, testing every phase of it by every method known to us. The newer features of our program cannot be properly seen or evaluated in isolation but must be considered in this framework which I have just sketched.

If you were to visit a typical communication class at U.S.C., you would find the group seated in a circle with the teacher's position not separated or distinguished in any way; or more frequently you would

find a panel of students conducting a discussion from the front of the room and the teacher sitting with the other students as one member of the audience. The point is that you would almost never find the teacher separated from his group by a reading desk or a table and never elevated above his class by a platform. Also, you would observe that the students talk without raising their hands to ask the teacher's permission to speak. The ordinary rules of good manners, you would see, are usually quite sufficient to keep three or four from talking at the same time—if not, the one with the greatest determination or prestige gets the floor.

Such things as tables and platforms and such conventions as raising the hand for permission to speak create artificial obstacles to a unified group attack on a problem. They make it almost impossible for the teacher to become a member of the group. But it is apparent that such mechanical matters are meaningless except as symbols; they are meaningless apart from the purposes and beliefs of the teaching staff and the student body. The symbols suggest that in many ways the student and the teacher are equal; that the acquisition of knowledge is a joint problem, just as much the student's responsibility as the teacher's, or more; that the student's ideas should be considered as well as the teacher's; that the whole group in fact makes decisions and takes responsibilities; and even, perhaps,

¹ A paper read at the spring meeting of the C.C.C.C. in Chicago on March 25, 1950.

² University of Southern California.

that democracy is a good way of life and that we must learn how to make it work. If the teacher does not believe these things, it does not help greatly to seat him with his students, for they soon discover that seated high or low he is still a tyrant and determined to remain one. And, similarly, if the students do not believe, it does not help to seat the teacher with them, for they will remain suspicious or, worse, indifferent until they really do accept the fundamental assumptions symbolized by the seating arrangement.

When all works well, the result is a quite remarkable atmosphere of friendliness, confidence, self-respect, and trust. The "climate"—to use the cant of the specialists in group dynamics—is "permissive." Whatever you call it, the fact is that students blossom in the warmth of such a classroom. They talk freely and earnestly; they feel that they belong to a group; they feel that they have been accepted; and they feel that they are really learning, really getting an education.

But sometimes things do not go well. The cause may lie in the teacher's lack of training or in his psychological maladjustment; or it may lie in the maladjustments of the students or in their unfortunate experiences with teachers in grade school and high school; or it may be just plain stupidity on both sides.

Whether things go well or badly, these are the matters covered by the phrase "group dynamics." It is the study of how groups act, a study motivated by a desire to learn why groups so frequently fail and what can be done to make them work better. Everyone will admit that the subject is of vast importance. Every person is a member of groups—a family group, a business group, and so on. Students will belong to groups all their lives. It is evidently of importance to help

them to function well as members of their various groups and to avail themselves of the possibilities of healthful development to be found in the group, and only there.

This is one of the beliefs that governed our planning when we were working out our communication program five years ago. Other central ideas should be at least briefly mentioned. We believed that in a democracy it is particularly necessary to train students to work with other people; that students must somehow be induced to take more mature responsibility for getting an education; that the members of one's own age group usually have more influence upon one than do older or younger persons; that a sound system of education must be self-exploratory, self-critical, and ready to change when change is desirable; and that a new plan must usually preserve a good deal of traditional material, must hold to high standards, and must be intellectually alive. It must root out the "inert ideas" which Professor Whitehead so vigorously condemned. I am not at the moment arguing that these beliefs which we acted upon are right, or that they are right everywhere, in every kind of school. All I am saying now is that when we worked out our plan, these are the beliefs that we attempted to incorporate in it.

In regard to group dynamics the very practical problem arises of how much theoretical study of the subject to include in an already overcrowded communication program. We make no attempt at present to include any such study in any direct or systematic fashion. Instead, we have tried to create a communication system that would force the student to face practical problems in group dynamics in every class period, and we have hoped that he would learn through experience to solve the problems.

Such experience must, in part at least,

be planned. One of the central features of our program is the complex of experiences connected with the election of class chairmen by the students themselves (and the nature of our work and of the purposes behind it is pretty well suggested by the fact that if the teacher appointed these chairmen instead of having the students elect their own leaders, the whole system would be altered). This procedure is complicated but perhaps it is worth examining in some detail. Early in each semester every student in every class writes out a brief speech, to be given later before the group. The teacher reads this composition, criticizes it, and returns it to the student. This arrangement has at least two advantages: it introduces the student to some of the differences between written and spoken English, and it puts the teacher at once on the side of the student—the teacher is helping the student to do as well as possible when he speaks to the group in language appropriate to the group. Before he speaks, the teacher or one of his classmates introduces him, and his name is written on the blackboard. After the student has given his talk, each member of the class writes out suggestions for his benefit and passes them to him. Also each member of the class keeps a record, perhaps a carbon copy for his own use later in voting for the class chairmen. By the time the speeches have been finished, nearly everyone in the class knows everyone else, the class is a friendly group, and a feeling of unity, of enjoyment, and of intellectual accomplishment has been created. Also, the teacher has been established in his position as a friendly adviser to all.

If in a particular class this plan does not work well, the teacher usually calls in two or three of the students and asks them for comments; or, after the chair-

men have been elected, he asks them to observe and to make suggestions for the improvement of the functioning of the group. The experts in group dynamics have a good deal to say about the usefulness of the "observer." They are quite right. The observer can be of great importance in bettering the work of any group. In our classes a different observer for each hour is selected by the class chairman about once or twice a week to analyze the functioning of the class. At the end of the hour he makes his suggestions for doing better work next time. Thus the students have some machinery for discovering and solving their problems as a group; if they fail, at least they may have learned a good deal by making the attempt.

The ordinary class of twenty-five or thirty students elects five chairmen, that is, one main chairman and four vice-chairmen. Each of the five chairmen immediately becomes the head of a team of five or six students; every student in the class is a member of a team, and permanently a member of that team. The chairman decides the membership of each team, attempting to make all the teams about equal in ability and to put together those who will complement each other effectively. It is a difficult task, requiring tact, good judgment, and insight. Matters of age, sex, intelligence, interest, aggressiveness, and so on must all be taken into account. It is easy to see how many practical problems in group dynamics are involved.

The two main functions of each team are to carry on panel discussions and to act as a theme-reading or tutorial group for its members. The term "panel" is used in a very broad sense to refer to any kind of discussion led by the members of one team, sitting together and facing the class. The subjects of discussion (like the

subjects of almost all the themes) concern the content of the course; that is, the students talk about the themes they have been writing, or about the newspapers and magazines they have been analyzing, or about the articles in their book of readings, and so on. The chairman schedules an orderly series of panels which will cover most of the work of the course. The teacher sits with the "audience" and volunteers information or directions when he feels that they are required, but in general he tries to place the responsibility for talking and learning upon the shoulders of the members of the class.

There are three ways of managing the reading of the themes. The chairman may direct the students of the whole class to exchange themes, or he may have the themes exchanged by the members of each team within the team, or every week a different team may undertake the reading of the themes for the whole class. How this is to be done is decided by the chairmen or by the whole group. At all events, the themes are handed in by all the students on, let us say, a Wednesday and on that day are taken by other students for criticism; on Friday the themes are returned to their authors, who may then rewrite them if they wish; and on Monday they are handed to the teacher, who then gives them a second reading and grades them.

Occasionally a student objects to reading another student's themes, taking the attitude, "Why should I help Bill to get a better grade?" The teacher usually offers this at once as a subject for group discussion and decision. Usually the student is convinced by other members of the class that he benefits both Bill and himself by reading Bill's themes and, further, that it is his duty to help Bill, whether he (the helper) gets any benefit

or reward or not. Actually most of the students testify that the reading of each other's themes is interesting and valuable: it helps them to know each other better, it gives them ideas for writing, and it forces them to develop the critical eye. Some lagging students, after reading an *A* student's themes, suddenly discover for the first time what good writing is.

The problem of mutual help occurs in a more severe form when one of the students repeatedly writes failing themes. When this happens, the teacher informs the chairman of the failing student's team, and it is then theoretically the task of the whole team to coach its weakest member and to bring him up to par. Actually this duty often falls almost entirely upon the brightest member of the team (the chairman usually puts on each team one of the brightest students, two or three average students, and one of the poorer students), and he sometimes feels it to be an imposition. Here is a complex and important moral and intellectual issue which the group must discuss.

When the themes are returned to the class, naturally each student looks for the teacher's comments and for his grade. At this point the teacher may ask each team to find examples illustrating a particular point, or he may suggest that the members of every team discuss their papers with the students who first corrected them. The class then divides up into what the experts in group dynamics call "buzz groups"—each person engaged in intimate discussion with his neighbor about a problem that all are facing, namely, the ways of doing better writing.

It has already become apparent that the duties of the class chairmen are numerous. In addition to carrying on the activities mentioned above, they meet as a group to discuss what is wrong

with the class procedures and to plan ways of making the class more valuable. They meet with the instructor for frequent conferences. Sometimes they meet with backward or maladjusted students for discussion of the student's problems. And at least once each semester all the main chairmen of all the classes meet with the teachers to consider the successes and failures of the course.

The evolution of our procedures in holding such meetings with our student chairmen may illustrate some of the more obvious principles of group dynamics. When we first held these meetings, the staff decided in advance that since students and teachers would be equal on this occasion, there should be an unrestrained exchange of ideas. This was a fine plan, in theory. But like many other fine theories it did not work, for the reason that in the presence of all the teachers the student chairmen would not talk freely. So the next year the staff chairman ruled that at these meetings the teachers should limit their speech to questions asking for clarification of points, while the students could say anything they wished. This plan seemed to work reasonably well for a year or so; but then it became apparent that the older members of the staff were bored at the meetings. Like students, they were bored when they were not given responsibility. Now a compromise has been worked out. At our meetings the students have the first hour for criticism of the course, more or less formal. Then coffee and doughnuts are served, the formal meeting is adjourned, and the informal meeting of students and teachers goes happily ahead, both sides talking with complete freedom. In the language of group dynamics, "buzz groups" take over and the "climate" is thoroughly "permissive"!

Two other devices utilized in the

U.S.C. English communication program should be mentioned before I attempt an evaluation of the work. The first device is the so-called "exchange panel." Each class selects its five best speakers to form a panel which goes to another class, meeting at the same hour, to discuss a question which all the classes have been studying for several weeks. The hoped-for effects of this plan are increased motivation, varied experience for all, deepened understanding of the question (which must be pertinent to the central aims of the course), and a feeling of group solidarity. The other method is that of inviting, each summer, an able teacher and administrator from another university to co-operate with the chairman of the course in offering a Communication Workshop, in which the procedures of the program are examined and evaluated. This plan is largely a means of giving practical training to the teacher-students in the workshop but inevitably serves, too, as a means of showing us the program through new eyes. The visiting professor, in the language of group dynamics, is an "observer."

It is impossible to isolate and measure precisely the part that group dynamics has played in the organization and operation of our program. We do not know whether our use of the principles of group dynamics has in itself been successful. But we have some objective evidence that as a whole our program incorporating many of the ideas of group dynamics has been relatively successful. In December of 1947, as part of our effort to test the effectiveness of our English communication work, we asked nine "regular" classes and an equal number of communication classes to fill out an anonymous questionnaire. Three of the questions asked were: Has the course helped you to speak in a group more effectively? Has the course helped you

in any way to become more tolerant? and Has the course helped you in any way in your relations with other people? In answering all three questions more than half the students in regular composition sections gave negative answers or were undecided, while more than half (a large majority) of the communication students gave positive answers. The exact figures, as supplied and analyzed by the University Testing Bureau are given in the accompanying tabulation. "R" means regular course; "C" means com-

In May of 1949 we undertook a study of our remedial English course (100y), which included a great deal of drill on matters of punctuation and spelling, use of a workbook, study of the rules of grammar, and so on. To our surprise, we discovered that while 55 per cent of the students seemed to improve somewhat in their mastery of grammar, diction, punctuation, spelling, and vocabulary, 36 per cent were no better at the end of the course than before starting it, and 9 per cent were actually worse, no doubt

	COLUMN					CHI SQUARED	DF	P
	1	2	3	4	5			
Has the course helped you to speak in a group more effectively?								
R.....								
R.....	8	61	27	58	12	37.02	4	.01—
C.....	3	29	31	93	43			
Has the course helped you in any way to become more tolerant?								
R.....								
R.....	10	65	34	50	6	33.00	4	.01—
C.....	5	36	44	87	29			
Has the course helped you in any way in your relations with other people?								
R.....								
R.....	6	64	30	56	10	23.14	4	.01—
C.....	0	44	34	105	18			

munication course. The figures are arranged in five columns, to which meaning was attached as follows: column 1, "Decidedly No"; column 2, "No"; column 3, "Undecided"; column 4, "Yes"; column 5, "Decidedly Yes." Concerning these responses and others to questions of a similar nature, Professor R. R. G. Watt, director of the Testing Bureau, wrote in his analysis of the statistics: "The opinions of Communication students on questions involving social values are very decided and yield high chi squares, indicating a more pronounced opinion favorable to the Communication method than appears in the attitudes of students in regular English sections toward the more conventional type of course."

because of a combination of confusion and boredom. Mr. F. B. Black, of the Testing Bureau, analyzed the figures in the more cautious words: "Although it cannot be stated conclusively from the data, apparently the things taught in the English 100y classes do not assist the student in passing the English Classification Test, which measures fairly well the amount of a certain part of English grammar, diction, punctuation, and spelling that a student has assimilated." What chiefly inspired Mr. Black's cautious approach was the fact that only 56 students were involved in the test.

Consequently, it was decided to repeat the test the following semester with all the freshman students who had been classified as needing remedial work, that

is, four sections totaling about 100 students (actually only 89 were available). Two of the sections were taught by our "best teachers," using conventional methods; the other two sections were taught by the communication methods as described above. It is important to notice that such matters as spelling, grammar, and so on *were* taught in the communication classes but *were not* taught in the classroom in any regular fashion. In other words, errors were corrected by the teacher or by other students as they occurred. No special effort was made in the communication classes to increase the mastery of vocabulary. Reliance was placed entirely upon what may be called "natural methods," that is, putting the group to work upon the problems of communication, letting interest and necessity (in part) determine the subjects to be considered, and placing responsibility upon the shoulders of the students. Two parts of the English Classification test were repeated at the end of the semester (for lack of time the full test was not repeated); the first part is concerned with grammar, diction, punctuation, and spelling, and the second with vocabulary. The two com-

munication classes made better progress in the areas measured by both parts of the test than the regular students who had been taught by conventional methods. The average of the two communication classes showed an increase of 3.18 points in the first part of the test, while the conventional classes showed an increase of only 2.84 points. In the second part of the test, that concerned with vocabulary, the communication classes showed an average increase of 3.34, while the other two classes increased only 2.20. Mr. Black comments: "By use of the statistical procedure known as the standard error of the difference between means, and the Null Hypothesis, the differences listed above were found to be statistically significant."

These figures, so far as our present knowledge is reliable, seem to be proof of the superiority of the communication methods as developed at the University of Southern California over the conventional methods—and, to the extent that these methods involve the application of the principles of group dynamics, the figures suggest the value of these principles as actually used in the college classroom.

In Defense of College Composition

CHARLES I. GLICKSBERG¹

I. ATTACK AND COUNTERATTACK

IN COLLEGES throughout the country the English department has been repeatedly under heavy attack because it requires one year's work in composition of all students. The members of the science department, for example, look upon all this as a dreadful waste of academic time,

utterly unjustified from any sound educational point of view. Why not substitute for it another year of science? Why not drop this requirement or modify it drastically so as to permit students to take an extra year of science which could be used to advantage in this predominantly scientific, neotechnological age? Other department heads also clamor for a place in the sun. To the arguments presented by

¹ Brooklyn College.

the members of the English department that instruction in English composition is indispensable, the curricular reformers invariably retort: Why teach English composition at all as a special subject? Why not exempt all those students who write literately and conscript only the semiliterate students. In curricular and administrative conferences the debate rages back and forth year after year.

Such academic assaults are difficult to answer, but at least one thing is clear: those who clamor for curricular reforms possess as a rule no adequate understanding of the newer trends in the study of the English language as a vehicle of thought and feeling, its communicative range, its complexity, its semantic ambiguities, and its vast, still unexplored potentialities. Such understanding would readily enable them to perceive that the study of English cuts across all departmental boundary lines, that it is not only a tool of thought and a medium of communication but also the expression of a personality, a means of comprehending one's self as well as others.

The answer to the hostile critics and doubting Thomases must be stated in convincing, affirmative terms, or the English curriculum will be stripped of its educationally most valuable features. The scientific Huns are on the march, and their objective is not only the elimination of English composition from the curriculum. If they had their way, they would sack the buildings in which the liberal arts are taught, raze them to the ground, and pour salt on the foundation. The new scientific barbarians, now that they have produced the atomic bomb, are determined to capture the citadel of education, adapt it to their own special ends, and establish a dictatorship of the physicists and technocrats. But, if the aim of education is to liberate the person-

ality as a whole and not merely to impart technical skills or specialized knowledge, then the study of English, both as language and as literature, must rightly be considered a vitally important part of the college curriculum. Such a study, since it brings the imagination and sensibility of the student into play, helps to develop culturally enriched, mentally discriminating, and emotionally integrated persons. The class in composition is a psychological laboratory, humanized and expressive, in action. In short, composition work, when it is properly conducted, draws forth a profound creative response on the part of the student; it prompts him to relive and reevaluate the past, to exercise his fund of sensibility and imagination, to reflect upon his attitudes and values and express them in an ordered pattern, to examine his life and perhaps even to justify it. And, in doing so, he comes to realize how difficult, how complex, language is as an art; he learns that writing is vastly more than a matter of mechanical correctness.

There is the academic superstition which must be eradicated from the minds of students and teachers: namely, the belief that English can be taught mechanically and by rote, that the aim and end of the educative process has been achieved when the student has learned how to write "correctly." The correct-usage doctrine, worshiped most sedulously by many men of science, assumes that if a construction is "correct," then all is well. Everything has been said that can or should be said. No more need be added, and nothing need be taken away. The rest that English instructors advocate is so much surface polish, rhetorical embellishment, aesthetic boondoggling. Hence the widespread belief that practi-

cally anyone with a Baccalaureate degree can teach English and the growing movement to have the subject taught incidentally, whenever the need for it should arise, as part of the instruction given in other departments.

I. A. Richards rightly believes that this very doctrine of correct usage is, on the whole, "the most pernicious influence in current English teaching."² Such a fetish stands in the way of vigilant self-criticism and inhibits the dynamic process of reflection about the way in which language actually operates: for, if we bow to the crude doctrine of correct usage, there is no further incentive to thinking about what we are doing when we use language. The better procedure by far, as Richards points out, is to experiment with language as in a laboratory, examining specimens and carefully comparing their structure and function, their interrelations and reciprocal influences, with other specimens. There is no fixed rule as to which sentence is right and which is wrong. From this it follows that it is absurd to believe that there is a paradigm, an antecedent model in constructing sentences which must be copied, as a builder observes blueprint specifications. That is not how language behaves. Words in sentences must be studied not only in their form but also in their content. Form and content are interconnected. What students need to know is how to use words, not how words have been used correctly in the past.

The error, of course, consists in making mechanical correctness the end, instead of the beginning, of English instruction. Such an objective, even if it is fully attained, gives the student the shadow, not the substance, of linguistic mastery. It

fails to regard language as a form of social behavior and therefore adaptable, dynamic, responsive to change, growing out of a living social situation. There are no ready-made formulas, no stereotyped responses, that will serve on all occasions. There are no signposted roads, no maps that will cover all the territory. Each situation, like each organism, is unique. Consequently, each sentence that emerges is a creative experiment, a venture into the unknown. It is difficult to see how the ends of correctness, rightly interpreted, can be gained without including the emotive and imaginative uses which language at all times, in its humblest as well as highest reaches, must embody. How much is actually achieved by copying paradigms, in correcting errors, and in memorizing the proper forms—then *stopping* there? What particular virtue is there in learning words and their meanings, one by one, as if that were the road to linguistic salvation? There is more, much more, between the heaven and earth of language than is included in such an atomistic philosophy.³

English teachers are therefore not primarily concerned with getting students to accumulate a large vocabulary. Traditional instruction in vocabulary development, assuming that it was educationally valuable, could be given by virtually any college teacher familiar with the English language. The problem cuts much deeper; it is fundamentally a problem of communication, a problem of meaning. As I. A. Richards puts it succinctly:

² The theory that language once began with separate words and gradually built up its complex, interdependent structure is now considered fallacious. Grace Andrus de Laguna, in *Speech* (New Haven and London, 1927), argues that language began with sentences rather than with words. Language never completely loses its dependence on context.

³ I. A. Richards, *Interpretation in Teaching* (New York, 1938), p. 174.

Nearly all our possibilities of experience today are offered us in imagination through words.... All our intellectual and most of our emotional discriminations keep their order and clarity through words. The whole abstract world of moral values is held for us by a framework of words. Still more important, our skill in sorting and manipulating these values in imagination is chiefly a skill with words. Our forms of thinking are verbal. Our modes of purpose and feeling, if they are not verbal, can at least be examined and compared by means of words.⁴

II. EXPERIENCES IN TEACHING COMPOSITION

The teaching of English composition is a specialized, highly skilled, and exacting art. The best efforts that students put forth will be most productive when they not only understand but also know how to apply the philosophy of composition that animates, or should animate, the course: namely, that language exists to satisfy a social purpose and that, consciously or unconsciously, it is adapted at all times to the needs of a particular situation. Hence they are not writing for writing's sake; they are writing for a specific audience with a definite purpose and end-result in mind. That is how the effectiveness of their work can be gauged. Does it accomplish what it set out to do? Does it communicate its meaning with maximum vividness and force? In the light of the philosophy of composition formulated for the course—a philosophy the validity of which the students can verify every time they write—the difference between vague, sloppy, unimaginative writing and writing that is vibrantly alive and compelling can be demonstrated. The students thus become enlightened critics not only of the work of others but also of their own. And the in-

structor makes clear to them, if they do not realize it for themselves, how tremendously difficult a task writing—good writing—is for practically everyone; even the professional writer groans at being chained to his desk; and there are no exceptions.

Each class has its own developed morale, its *esprit de corps*. There are no precedents to guide the instructor in every case. No two classes are exactly alike. Slowly he must get to know his students, encourage the laggards and the easily disheartened, make them feel that he is genuinely interested in their contribution. He is best able to do that by creating a natural audience situation, instead of making a grade the goal of the writing process. As for the rest, he leaves that to the energy and originality of youth and the will of God. There is little need for "motivation" in the pedagogic sense.

Unfortunately, the frantic, competitive scramble for high marks acts in many cases as a deterrent to effective writing. The realization on the part of the student that he will be marked for his effort sets up an emotional blockage, a mental set that is inhibiting. He is determined to impress his instructor; at the same time, he is so fearful that he may not be writing what the instructor wants or that he may be committing glaring error in grammar or what not that he ceases to trust his judgment and despairs of his ability to produce an original paper.

To save himself from academic bankruptcy, he resorts to the time-honored expedient of "research," an honorific name for what frequently degenerates into downright plagiarism. To salve his conscience, or perhaps to throw his instructor off the trail, he changes a word and phrase here and there, and, by the

⁴Basic in Teaching: East and West (London, 1935), p. 62.

time the theme is finished, he may be convinced that it is his own creation. There are some who never suspect and certainly refuse to admit that they are guilty of plagiarism. There is, to be sure, always the possibility of accusing an innocent, God-gifted young soul of the crime of plagiarism. Occasionally, the lightning of inspiration does strike: the Muses sing, the words dance. The alert and experienced instructor can usually distinguish the sheep from the goats, the copycats from the nightingales. Something can be done with the gross sinners, if it is done with discretion and kindness; the class as audience will do the rest. If the student is asked how much research he has done on his topic, what books he has consulted, a glimmering of the truth will emerge. Such experiences lead to a discussion of the following problems: When is it proper to make explicit acknowledgement of sources? When should one use quotation marks, and when is one justified in paraphrasing? Open discussion helps to clear up whatever confusion may linger in the minds of students about the ethics of scholarship.

The instructor must stress the importance of revision. The first unrehearsed set of impressions, the spontaneous, higgledy-piggledy uprush of ideas, cannot always be trusted. It is necessary to re-examine them in the light of day, to view them objectively and from different perspectives. That is why, the instructor goes on to say, he himself is in the habit of distrusting anything he writes in the heat of anger or emotional excitement. Generally, what he does is to put the manuscript or letter aside and allow it to cool off for a day or two, and then take it up again. He is often surprised at how his attitude has changed in the interval. This may prompt one student to say: "Ah, but that was your *real* self.

When you revised the writing you were disguising your true feelings." Here is a conception of the real self that needs to be dissociated semantically. In the sentence "I am not myself today," what is the self? Who is I? If the self was not itself at that time, then it must have been some other self, unless we interpret it as a clear case of demoniacal possession. The answer, of course, is that there is no real, enduring, intrinsic self that can be singled out while the other "selves" are dismissed as deceptive *ignis fatui*. The organism functions as a whole; it cannot be broken up into a number of discrete, hierarchically arranged, and independent parts.

When students fail in their writing—and by "writing" I do not mean anything absolute but the failure that mediocrity represents—it is not because they lack expressive power but because they refuse or are disinclined to make the imaginative effort. After a while, however, they "know" the difference between a composition that is alive and one that misses fire. They comment with wonder on the astonishing fact that communicative efficacy is not always proportionate in terms of imaginative richness to the amount of time spent on a theme. Again and again the creative miracle takes place. It does not take the students long to perceive that there is a positive correlation between richness of experience plus interest in the subject written about and the excellence of the result achieved.

III. THE AUDIENCE SITUATION

A course in English composition cannot be taught effectively without giving the written work of students a position of central importance. It is only by getting them to feel that their work is read and appreciated for what it reveals about them, their life and thought and feelings,

their aspirations and beliefs, that any spark of genuine originality can be called forth. They must be led to realize that their confidences will be respected, their secret inner life treated with sympathetic understanding, not harshly criticized as sentimental. By placing due emphasis on the public reading of compositions, the instructor creates a desirable audience situation. The student never knows whether he may be called upon the following day to read his theme before the group. And he knows, from past experience in the classroom, that, while the criticism will be friendly and forbearing, it will be conscientiously honest. Outstanding work, writing notable for its freshness of feeling and observation and depth of thought, will be enthusiastically praised. Mediocre or inferior work will be politely voted down, on the ground that it lacks interest. Nothing is more heartening than the demonstrated capacity of students to be fair-minded, penetrating critics. When they enjoy an uncommonly original performance, their response is all that could be desired by the vainest of authors. Such heartfelt group appreciation contributes immeasurably to the morale of a class and provides an admirable incentive to better writing in the future.

In one composition class the students were asked to write a friendly letter. In his explanation the instructor pointed out that a letter of this sort should reveal the personality of the writer. The richer, the more sensitive and complex the personality, the more interesting the letter would be, provided that the writer succeeded in communicating his personality to the written page.⁵ There were some spirited objections. One student declared that it was impossible to compose a friendly letter under such conditions, when she knew it would be marked by

the instructor and perhaps even read before the class. Another student, a confessed cynic, declared: "Let us not fool ourselves. We are writing these themes for marks, and each one will therefore try to compose the kind of letter which he thinks will please the instructor." This criticism was frankly discussed, and it was gratifying to note that a number of students denied the allegation. They were free, they said, to write anything they please; there were no restrictions, no suggestion of censorship. The only requirement was that each letter should, as far as possible, reveal the personality of the writer.

A great many of the letters turned in were about matters that concern the mind of a "normal" college sophomore. The girls wrote about parties, dates, sweethearts, summer romances, fraternity dances, home affairs, shopping expeditions, and so on. The young men, many of them World War II veterans, wrote about their experiences in the war, the problem of adjustment to college, the advisability of getting married before they were self-supporting, and so on. Yet there were sufficient numbers of unmistakably original letters to indicate that the pedagogic exhortation had not been in vain. When these letters were read to the class, all eyes were focused on the writer, as if marveling at his courage in thus stripping himself spiritually naked. One girl read a touching letter, protesting against the horror of war which took the life of the young and would spill the blood of any male children she might

⁵ Specimens of personal letters by George Washington, Melville, William James, and others were read at home and discussed in class, but during the discussion period the students agreed that it was futile to attempt to emulate these models. Since each one possessed a distinctive personality, it was his duty as a writer to express it in all its uniqueness.

bring into the world. She also voiced her fears of old age. Age might possibly confer wisdom and serenity, but she dreaded to lose what made youth so inexpressibly precious: impetuosity, the sense of freedom and exuberance and adventurousness. A young man read a letter in which he described his decision to give up his career as a radio singer; henceforth he would dedicate his talent to anyone who would enjoy hearing him sing; for on the battlefield, after beholding the fear that men felt before plunging into battle and after searching his own soul, he had come to the mature conviction that he would devote his life to serving God. The letter, written with humility, rang true. Finally, one student read a letter describing her attempt to paint and her elation when she at last succeeded in producing an impressionistic daub that was her interpretation of a scene in nature. Each of the letters chosen to be read in class was in one way or another a revelation of the writer's interests and preoccupations, his beliefs and ideals.

Such rewarding lessons are the rule rather than the exception. The composition class is a forum, a confessional, a psychiatric clinic. There was the case of the young man (he had been in the army four years and had served in the major campaigns in Europe) who read his essay on the Nuremberg trials. The class, listening intently, heard him say: "Germany was no more to blame for starting this war than France or Britain or the United States." "War is an economic struggle between the haves and the have-nots." "There is no right and no wrong in time of war." After all, such questions as what is right and what is wrong are fundamentally meaningless. "Good" was whatever the conquering power decreed. He quoted Mussolini and maintained that the "propaganda" regarding Nazi atrocities

were grossly exaggerated. The American troops were also guilty of killing prisoners. If Germany had won the war, the world would have witnessed a Nuremberg trial in reverse, and the Nazi propaganda machine would have flooded the world with declarations that justice had triumphed.

When he had finished reading, hands were raised violently. One young man who had been in the Battle of the Bulge as a member of the Intelligence Corps, assured the writer that he could furnish him with plenty of firsthand documented evidence that the Germans had committed outrageously inhuman acts; the surviving relatives of those who had perished in concentration camps and death chambers could enlighten him on that score. Moreover, it was monstrously false to assert that there was nothing to distinguish the actions of the American armed forces, in their treatment of prisoners, from those of the *Wehrmacht*. Certainly, some American soldiers were guilty of atrocities, but they were individual acts, not the established policy of the government, and that made all the difference in the world. Another student, his voice hoarse with indignation, denounced as unthinkable the idea that there was no right and no wrong, to which the writer of the essay retorted that such moral judgments changed with the time. When the Catholics were in power, they massacred the Protestants, and that was considered a righteous act of God. When the Protestants were in power, they killed off the Catholics, and that, too, was right. What, then, is "right"? At this point, a student, thirty-one years old, entered vigorously into the fray. Leaning forward, his face quivering with excitement, he insisted that in time of war, when men were faced with the ultimate of death, moral categories

were utterly beside the point. No one thought of them. The only consideration was the law of survival. The heated discussion persisted long after the bell had rung.

IV. INDIVIDUAL CONFERENCES

The most beneficial educational therapy, in a composition course, is to arrange individual conferences with the students. The time thus spent is well invested. These conferences not only help them to correct their faults but also give them a feeling of confidence, an added incentive to write their best. Their personal handicaps and inhibitions (when these exist) can be diagnosed. Once students realize that a personal interest is taken in their work, they ask searching questions, write with greater effort and care, and participate actively in class discussions. The conference should be instituted primarily for the purpose of giving students personal help and encouragement. The instructor seeks to establish rapport with each student, to know his interests and idiosyncrasies, his ambitions and ideals, as much of his past as bears on his present life, his hopes and plans for the future, and a host of other things which the student may feel inclined to divulge.

Everything depends on the way in which the conference is conducted. The student should be free to ask questions, to discuss frankly the problems that confront him as a writer, and to receive whatever aid he happens to require. There is no way of anticipating what direction the conference will take. The instructor, like the practicing psychiatrist, must be flexible in attitude, repressing any all-too-human tendency to pass hasty moral judgments. If he sermonizes or condemns, the student will instinctively withdraw into his shell, and

the conference will degenerate into a series of polite questions and perfunctory replies. The instructor's chief function is to listen, because only by listening, by remaining objective and detached, though sympathetic, can he hope to understand the secret of the complex personality before him. The students are of all conceivable types—the shy and the overconfident, the talkative and the taciturn, the suspicious and the naïvely trusting, the friendly and the distant—and the instructor must intuitively adjust himself to every temperament. If he does that—and he cannot help making the attempt if he wishes the conference to be a success—he will find that the interview often extends beyond the fifteen minutes usually allotted, but he has the satisfaction of making some illuminating discoveries about his students, who will begin to take on a marked individuality.

Each story, each confession, throws a revealing light on the particular writing problems that the students have to face. Here are some random but fairly representative samples of what students tend to talk about during the conference period. One girl, who is studying ballet dancing intensively, does not feel that she possesses sufficient talent for such a career and is therefore turning to library work as a means of earning a livelihood. She is fearful, shut-in, even highly inhibited, conscientious to a fault. Another maintains that love is no more than friendship and calls herself "realistic" as opposed to those who "romanticize" love. Though she is specializing in Freudian psychology, she still believes that sex is sacred, a mystery that should not be profaned by discussion before the consummation of marriage. A third wants to study optometry, not that he is particularly drawn to this profession, but he

has lost four years in the army—he is now twenty-five—and he would like to take the shortest route to economic security and independence. In the course of the conference it develops that he loves to write, that he composes poetry for its own sake, and that he considers himself a superior writer to some of the authors included in the anthology, *The American Reader*, used for supplementary reading. Another girl tells how she had been in love with and hoped to marry a young man who was killed abroad. Another, in accounting for the unevenness of her work and its recurrent strain of melancholy, describes the recent death of her father and the shattering effect this had on her plans for the future.

V. CONCLUSION

One never knows what will turn up in the classroom, since teaching is so human a calling. Each day is unpredictable, full of startling surprises. A word thrown out may start a hare or initiate a "revolution." Henry Adams was right when he declared that a teacher's words ring down through all eternity. The first important prerequisite in a composition course is to make the students feel that what they write is genuinely appreciated. The instructor sets the stage: the level of aspiration, the goal to be reached. If he has succeeded in establishing rapport, in winning the confidence of his students, the next step is to create a natural audience situation. Students like to exchange ideas, to hear the critical comments of their classmates, to learn what others think and feel, and, of course, to receive deserved praise. Public readings of com-

positions are specially effective in a mixed heterogeneous group. Students learn a great deal by hearing how other minority groups—Italians, Greeks, Armenians, Jews—live. If these readings are properly conducted, the students forget their anxiety neurosis regarding mechanical errors and find these sessions, devoted to such topics as the coal strike, the Palestinian situation, the conscientious objectors still in prison, the menace of war, most absorbing.

The purpose that English instruction in composition serves cannot be carried out by other departments of the college. The study of English cuts across all departmental boundary lines. A knowledge and mastery of the English language is basic to every intellectual discipline. As the Harvard Report, *General Education in a Free Society*, expresses it: "Communication is basic to science as well as to literature; the power to think effectively is as essential to all forms of speech as it is to mathematics." The doubting Thomases of the academic brotherhood must be made to realize that literacy is not enough, that correctness is not enough; students must be rescued from the prevalent shibboleth that the mastery of English involves nothing more than a matter of conformity to the canons of good usage. A course in composition is, at the same time, a course in applied psychology, an adventure in self-exploration, a voyage on strange seas of the imagination, and a reconnaissance flight over unknown territory. The classroom becomes a laboratory in which the miracle of creation out of nothing, as it were, takes place.

The Senior College English Program¹

ROY P. BASLER²

THE needs of the students on the senior college level should determine the curriculum on that level, but when we have admitted this truism we may not find it easy to delimit these needs sufficiently in thirty minutes. Thus, I fear that much of what I shall say will fall into the category of the obvious, and the rest of it in the category of the improbable. Whatever pattern of courses is adopted by a department of English should attempt to fill the needs of English majors and minors first and elective students second. Likewise, whatever program of guidance is undertaken by the department will be concerned primarily with departmental majors and minors, but this does not mean that guidance may be perfunctory or mere routine. It should be concerned with each student as an individual and should strive to aid each student in choosing courses and gaining experience which he particularly needs. I suppose it may be assumed that our chief effort to meet needs must be through the medium of courses.

As I see it, there is no final solution to questions about which type of course or which period in literature is best for the junior college and which is best for the senior college. A survey course in literature can be an introductory course or a culminating course, but in either instance

it has a different function and different objectives. Likewise, a systematic course in the nature of poetry can be adapted, depending on the teacher, certainly, with equal success to the level of maturity and literary background of sophomores or seniors. Literature and language, in any of the several approaches, have something worthy of study by every human being. If this is a correct view, then what the department of English has to do is to face the needs and interests of students on the senior college level and attempt to evolve courses which will meet these needs within the time limits which are fixed. It should go without saying that decisions cannot be made concerning the senior college separate from the junior college. A four-year unity must be planned, moving, perhaps, from less to more specialization but at the same time from narrower to broader acquaintance with language and literature.

Although literature and language are not finally separable, the courses in English which have been evolved over the years tend to emphasize either language or literature in approach. We are all familiar with *Beowulf* or *Macbeth* taught from either point of view. I well recollect a course in Elizabethan drama which scarcely got beyond the idiosyncrasies of Elizabethan English as a requisite to the understanding of the drama. If the teaching of our older masters has sometimes given too much attention to language, the moderns have rarely been studied linguistically and perhaps could be with benefit. But my reason for mentioning

¹ A paper read at the College Section meeting of the NCTE convention at Buffalo, November 22-26, 1949.

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the two phases, language and literature, is to suggest that in seeking to analyze the senior college program we should keep language as well as literature in mind. In my experience, departments of English have tended to ignore English as language and have overdeveloped courses in English literature on the senior college level.

Since the problem of teaching English as language seems to me imperative in our efforts to develop a college curriculum in English, I want to comment first on that phase. If in freshman English we introduce our students to English as it is and help them to acquire a somewhat scientific attitude toward problems in usage and meaning, as well as to some appreciation of the art of effective writing and speaking, then, surely, on the senior college level we should provide opportunity for, and perhaps even require participation in, more advanced study of language. In the training of English teachers, we have a particular responsibility to see that our product knows the techniques and results of linguistic study well enough to avoid our old misemphasis on prescriptive grammar. For teachers who will certainly have to teach students to write and speak, as well as to read with understanding and appreciation, there can be no doubt that a course in modern English usage should buttress the numerous courses in literature which have composed in many colleges the whole English major on the senior college level.

May we go further and suggest that advanced courses in the English language have practical and cultural value for all English majors? If so, what is the status quo of language courses in English? Today, many colleges offer a course in the history of the English language

which was all but unknown fifteen or twenty years ago. There is, perhaps, less often a course in modern English usage, which from the point of view of need is more important. One less often finds an English department offering courses in general semantics, but more and more of the junior college courses in communication skills are trying to incorporate essentials of the psychological and social study of language in action. It seems to me that an English department is obliged to offer on the senior college level courses calculated to afford its majors an opportunity to study English as language. I should go even further and state that, in my opinion, if there are to be requirements of basic courses for all majors in English, some concentration in language courses should be required along with the basic courses in literature. One may suspect that, beyond basic courses in the English language, there is as much justification for additional ramification of language courses as there is for the period courses, genre courses, and what not in literature. A course in American language is as valuable to an English major as a course in American drama, and a course in general semantics may well offset a course in Romantic poetry.

The question of needs is not so simple in the literature phase of the senior college program as it is in the language phase, for, whereas in language it is largely a question of what courses to inaugurate, in literature it is a question of new approaches and shifting emphasis. Traditional courses have tended to be predominantly chronological courses; after an introductory chronological survey comes the intensive chronological period course, such as "The Eighteenth Century," and great masters courses, such as "Shakespeare" or "Milton," and

these have been buttressed by genre or types courses, such as "The English Essay" or "Lyric Poetry."

It is a commonly held opinion that any literature course which departs from the primarily chronological approach is suspect. Even the genre courses merely select one type of literature in order to concentrate on its chronological development. Without question, chronology is necessary to the academic study of literature, and the analysis of types is a valuable adjunct; but, if we remember our own experience as readers outside our academic environment (I am assuming that teachers read outside of class!), we must admit that a work of literature is not confined to its form or limited to its epoch. Shakespeare is not read primarily as an Elizabethan or as a dramatist but as a man speaking to men, and the current popularity of the *Odyssey* testifies that Homer speaks in a good modern translation. Is there not something more fundamental than chronology or genre which can lend significant pattern to the study of literature on the senior college level?

Before I offer suggestions on this point, I wish to consider another need—the need for more acquaintance with the literature of languages other than English. It is obvious that our students need and want a wider and deeper acquaintance with non-English and non-American writers. The trend in college English curriculums toward more courses in non-English literature in translation is unmistakable and, I believe, permanent. Not only has the assumption been abandoned that if one wishes to study Homer he must do it in Greek, but college English teachers, perhaps under the impact of curriculum trends toward general education, have found themselves offering

more and more courses in world literature, world masterpieces, great books, and so forth.

Although chronology and types have provided the dominant organization in such courses, other principles of coherence have tended to inform the student of relationships across time and space. Cultural patterns, folk customs, and religious and ethical concepts loom as more significant bonds between the *Ramayana*, the *Odyssey*, and the *Nibelungenlied* than do their respective places in chronology or their genre. Euripides, Shakespeare, and Eugene O'Neill gain something in being compared as portrayers of human nature rather than as dramatic technicians or representatives of their respective eras. It may be suspected that only the minor poet loses much by being extracted from his particular era and that the mind of man has not been so closely circumscribed by time and place after all.

Two things are needed in the senior college literature program which seem to me to be related—one is the provision for more courses in which the best of English and American literature is studied in relation to and in comparison with the best in foreign literatures, not merely the classics of past centuries but the best works of more recent times. Nineteenth-century English and European literature provides possibilities for a more significant course than English literature alone. Nineteenth-century English writers who are abandoned in the combination will hardly contribute so much to the English major's knowledge or appreciation of literature as will the European writers who are gained. Of course, this is not to say that our students should not learn any European literature through another language.

That is still an optimum goal, but the fact is that we cannot afford longer to risk our students' knowledge of great foreign literature upon the possibility of his learning one or a half-dozen different languages. Likewise, in my opinion, we cannot afford to suppose that, without getting acquainted with foreign literatures while in college, our students will be likely to choose to read foreign writers after leaving college.

The second thing needed is the formulation of courses which are essentially comparative in nature, but by this I do not wish to be understood to mean courses which are held to an older tradition of comparative philology. We can learn from the comparatist both what to do and what not to do. We can consider the common themes of literature, seek the common denominator in man's quest for God, look for the sources of antagonism and distrust between groups and between individuals, study pitfalls of passion and nets of rationalization, observe the pathos or the humor which characterizes not only Shakespeare's heroes and heroines but also those of Dostoevski or Goethe, and seek to appreciate the complimentary aesthetics and ethics of the Orient and the Occident. Although such comparative study should not neglect chronology, it may well evolve theoretic and aesthetic patterns which will provide a more satisfactory framework for the organization of courses.

Risking the propriety of a personal experience, I want to suggest as examples two particular kinds of course that seem to me to offer for the study of literature something that neither chronology nor types of literature can offer. I have tried them out myself and have had some satisfaction with them. One of these is a course combining oriental and American

literature, which undertakes to develop an appreciation for the common bonds between the two. It is not so much a matter of influence as it is a matter of affinity. Oriental philosophy and art have blended into the American dream something of their imagery, aesthetic attitude, and poetic mysticism from Whitman and Emerson to Carl Sandburg. Vachel Lindsay, John Gould Fletcher, Amy Lowell—in fact, the whole group of "imagist" poets—avowed an indebtedness to the Orient which requires more than the nodding acquaintance which has been assigned to it in American literature courses. The value of an acquaintance with oriental literature to the reading of Emerson and Whitman can hardly be overestimated in such an approach.

Another type of course in American literature is a short course tracing the dogma of human worth in the American belles-lettres as well as in our utilitarian political and social tracts. The problem of human relations and the concept of freedom and equality have provided motivation to nearly all the best American works of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but chronological or genre relationships hardly provide teachers or students with the means of perceiving this primary bond between *The Scarlet Letter* and *Huckleberry Finn*, or *Daisy Miller* and *A Farewell to Arms*, or *A Song of Myself* and *The People Yes*—not to mention that between Lincoln's great speeches and the novels of William Faulkner or John Dos Passos.

I might describe two or three others, but the purpose of illustration would not be served much further. The primary coherence of such a course is thematic, but the thematic emphasis in no wise limits the works studied.

In such courses we begin always with the writer's communication now, to us,

rather than with his place in history, or his technique, or his ideological antecedents. We take his characters, situations, and symbols as a projection of human experience, to be appreciated primarily as vicarious living—the opportunity to feel, think, and imagine through a personality (or personalities) other than our own. We proceed only secondarily to questions of technique and historical and ideological milieu as they affect this communication and only in order that our vicarious experience may avoid distortion. We conclude by observing the particular vicarious experience afforded by the writer under consideration, in relation to the composite of our past experiences in literature and in life, and make such tentative evaluations as we can, leaving to the future questions which require further cogitation.

I can see that it may quite logically be maintained that only a sound acquaintance with the chronological past will enable the individual student to keep his bearings in such courses. I admit that this is so, to some extent, but that admission merely strengthens my conviction that, once we have provided our students with chronological perspective in a basic course, we may well free ourselves and our students from complete slavery to chronology as the dominant pattern of course organization.

I know that there are objections that can be raised to such courses in particular, as well as to the whole idea that the English curriculum needs reforming. The best argument for chronology is that it is *fixed*, and genre provides a relatively simple, if more or less meaningless, pattern of division. Teachers have been well trained in these patterns, and, professionally, some of us have staked our claim to a particular period or genre and enjoy a certain sense of security in it which we

are sometimes prompted to defend with all the scholarly weapons at our command, if a colleague ventures to encroach. Yet in all honesty we must recognize that it is more significant to study *Huckleberry Finn* and *The Scarlet Letter* or *Faust* and *Hamlet* primarily as artistic treatments of life and only secondarily as novels or dramas or as reflections of their respective epochs and nations. Fundamentally, human nature rather than chronology or nationality seems to me to afford the more meaningful patterns for the study of literature, and, although I do not contemplate with satisfaction the possibility of courses in the sociology of literature or the psychology of literature, I believe that we may begin to organize a few courses in literature in which we recognize psychological and social concepts as of no less importance than rhetorical concepts and historical data. More important, perhaps, is the possibility of organizing basic courses in the masterpieces of the world, including English and American, to be studied comparatively and around these basic courses a periphery of supplemental courses which can be organized in a variety of patterns—chronological, systematic, and thematic—and which can be changed from time to time, and experimented with, for the purpose of developing new approaches and improving old ones.

So far, I have been dealing with what seem to me to be general needs that can be met by course offerings. I conclude with brief mention of certain needs that seem to me to grow out of the fact that our senior college students do not all fall into one homogeneous group. In most of our colleges we have at least two groups in our major: those who intend to teach and those who do not. Few liberal arts colleges fail to number a large percentage

of majors who will teach, and most teachers colleges have a considerable number who will not. Hence, it seems to me that on the senior college level the department of English must plan its major chiefly in terms of these two groups. For those who will teach we must afford the experiences particularly important to teachers. This means not merely a materials-and-methods course and some practice in teaching during the senior year but essential participation in speech, in play production, and perhaps in journalism, for those who will teach in the public schools. When we know that a large proportion of our students will have to sponsor a high school paper or actually teach a course in newspaper-writing, or coach plays and produce assembly and radio programs, we cannot in good conscience turn them out wholly unequipped to do those things which are expected, to some extent, of the English teacher. For this reason I believe that it is necessary to formulate a major with a common core of basic courses in language and literature but with some differentiation for the two groups indicated.

Probably most colleges have already taken steps in this direction, but I should like to see the curriculum commission evolve a statement of general pattern recognizing these two groups and making general recommendations for taking care of their more or less divergent needs. Such a statement would be, in my opinion, of great assistance in bringing a common problem to something approaching a common solution, without attempting to enforce a rigid conformity.

Some may feel that there is a possibility for even further differentiation in the English major which will permit, for example, those schools which have student enrolment and faculty to afford it, a major with emphasis on American lit-

erature and one with emphasis on world literature in translation, as well as the traditional major in English literature. Quite probably there will be in the next few years, if I am a good guesser, a considerable number of schools which will offer an English major with emphasis on language rather than on literature. The trend toward more English language courses and toward more courses in literature in translation is certain, but whether the English department will continue to encompass them is problematic. In the larger universities it has seemed all but impossible to keep American literature from expanding into a separate department, and the same may be true of linguistics and comparative literature. I for one have hope, however, that we may be able to relegate this expansion to the graduate school and keep an undergraduate department of language and literature which undertakes to co-ordinate basic instruction in American, English, and world literature in one major and which includes, in addition, the basic courses in language.

I wish to mention two other needs which may be termed individual rather than group needs, though there are, certainly, large numbers of individuals involved in each. One of these is the need for individual study projects which follow lines of personal interest rather than of organized course offerings. Every department of English should, it seems to me, make specific provision for students who wish to follow a worthy interest or idea acquired in or out of organized courses, regardless of whether specific courses are available which would afford the opportunity in themselves. Sometimes this need has been provided for by means of a tutorial course in which the faculty member performs the service of consultant or guide and carries on a series

of conferences which culminate in the student's preparing a senior thesis or a piece of creative writing. Sometimes this type of study and guidance has been limited to honors students, whether with complete justification or not, I am not certain. I am inclined to think that admittance to this type of work should depend upon proved motive rather than ability and that credit allowance for it should depend, so far as possible, upon the amount of work involved and the tangible results shown. Probably, limits should be set to the amount of credit allowable for this type of work, but no departmental program should ignore it entirely.

The other individual need is a related one and in practice is sometimes met by the same tutorial system—it is simply the need for individual self-expression and further development, for their own sake, of the arts of speaking and writing which we undertake to stimulate in a first- or second-year course. To some extent this need can be met in courses in

literature, provided teachers are sufficiently latitudinarian in their dogma regarding term papers and class reports; but advanced writing and speaking should be provided for their own sake, in courses in writing and speaking and to some extent, perhaps, in an elective tutorial arrangement.

If I have said nothing specifically about the senior college student's need to grow in effective personality and social adjustment, or his need for varied emotional experience, or other needs about which we have been hearing a good deal, it is not that I am unaware of them or that I disagree with the fact that they are fundamental. I have talked about courses more than about students, because in my experience it is not so hard to come to an agreement on these fundamentals as it is to reorganize a rigid and sacrosanct pattern of courses. In any event, what practically can be done is often more to the point than what theoretically ought to be done, and every college must find its own answer.

Required Course

Bell-herded here, these thirty graphite slates
Resist the penciled hardness of the word.
The nurtured sponges of indifference
Erase, with well-conditioned (reflex) smudge
The fleeting influence of the ordered page.

Fruitless as desert rain, unheard
Here fall Dan Chaucer's sly remarks. And
here
The punning Shakespeare plays with words
alone,
Turning their facets to the gray of clouds.

Hear thuds

The broken butt of Dryden's leveled lance.
And here the sharpest darts Dean Swift can
wing
Blunt their keen points.

Automatons mechanically protest
The need to flex the arid joints; and yet
The pressings of a master-switch produce
Regurgitated wisdom, scrawled on sheets,
With only interlineal appeal
To welcome irritation of the bell.

R. I. BRIGHAM

Current English Forum

HAROLD B. ALLEN, ADELINE C. BARTLETT, MARGARET M. BRYANT (*chairman*), ARCHIBALD A. HILL, JAMES B. McMILLAN, KEMP MALONE, RUSSELL THOMAS

ALL IS NOT GOLD

Not the least responsibility of the English instructor is to judge statements about language. If he has kept abreast of professional recognition of the implications of linguistic science for him, then he may have little difficulty with such out-and-out misstatements as occur in popular articles and radio programs, but even he may well be misled by unsound statements which have the aura of scholarly authority.

Many were thus misled by Frederick Bodmer's *The Loom of Language*. This book received popular acclaim but was so inaccurate that it was ridiculed by persons with linguistic training. Also misleading is John B. Opdycke's *The Language of Wisdom and Folly*, with statements about usage which at first seem plausible but which do not agree with known facts. To see how the linguistic scholar treats such performances, one should read the hard-hitting review of Bodmer's work by the late Leonard Bloomfield, in *American Speech* for October, 1944, and that of Opdycke's book by Lou LaBrant, in *American Speech* for February, 1950.

Mario Pei's *The Story of Language*¹ is perhaps even more deceptive. Here is a work by a professor of Romance languages in a major university. It has been enthusiastically approved in *Life* magazine, by various not too critical literary critics, and by the board of the Book-of-the-Month Club, whose redoubtable Clifton Fadiman produced a eulogy so glowing that the publishers are using it as a testimonial. From several high school teachers I have heard that opinions of colleagues and acquaintances reflect their reading this book. Its influence may well be

such as to call for some consideration by the teacher of English.

In writing *The Story of Language* Professor Pei set out to popularize facts about language with a minimum of the technical vocabulary found in the learned journals. This is a laudable purpose, one justly appreciated by the teacher who may sometime have stumbled over "phoneme," "open juncture," "allophone," and "isogloss." This book may indeed seem an engaging introduction to a new world. Its glittering merits would make it appear wholly good to the uncritical.

But it is not all gold. It is something less than good. I do not refer to such inaccuracies as Pei's etymologies of *faker* (p. 201), *calico* (p. 220), and *dam* (p. 235); his notion (p. 100) that the glottis is an organ; his extraordinary assertion that there are five basic vowel-sounds, coupled with the statement that [æ] (the so-called "flat" ʌ-sound) is not a basic vowel in English; his belief that, while the English *o*-vowel is a diphthong, the *i*-vowel (as in "machine") is a simple "cardinal" vowel; or his supposition, disproved a decade ago,² that the construction with the auxiliary *do* was influenced by an intensive use of *faire* in Old French (p. 136).

Nor do I refer in detail to some of Pei's misconceptions about American English. He repeats the journalistic superstition, for instance, that Ozarkian English stems directly from that of Elizabethan England (p. 50), whereas—and American scholars have often pointed this out—its ancestry must actually be traced to eighteenth-cen-

¹ Mario Pei, *The Story of Language* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1949).

² See V. Engblom, *On the Origin and Early Development of the Auxiliary "Do"* ("Lund Studies in English," Vol. VI [Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1938]).

tury northern English. And he seems to be quite unaware of the findings of American dialect geographers with respect to the existence of the important Midland dialect extending west from Pennsylvania into Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois.

It is for other reasons that we who teach usage should be disturbed by this book and its wide readership. One is its failure to offer a clean-cut description of the language as structure. The need for such description in a book about language had been certified by C. C. Fries in his Atlantic City address before the National Council, an address later published as "Implications of Linguistic Science for Teachers of English."¹ Here Fries called for an approach to the teaching of usage through an understanding of the new linguistic devices of structural analysis. But though Pei has a chapter about language structure, the reader can get from it no such picture as that seen by the linguist when he looks at language. Indeed, even Pei's definitions of language are offered on a take-your-choice basis (p. 95). He suggests that a dictionary editor thinks of language as simply a list of words; but, as an ex-lexicographer, I would say that to list the words in a language is not necessarily to believe that the language itself is only the list. Yet Pei himself apparently thinks kindly of this belief, if I interpret correctly his remark (p. 435) that "those who claim that Latin is a dead language might well ponder on the English use of such words as 'quota,' 'memorandum,' 'agenda,' 'maximum,' 'medium,' 'data,' 'onus,' 'bonus,' and 'prospectus.'"

Pei's failure to treat language as a structure of patterns instead of an aggregate of words is paralleled by his preoccupation with writing. Though he admits that modern linguistic science recognizes the priority of speech, he himself insists rather that "the written word . . . is worthy of greater consideration."

¹C. C. Fries, "Implications of Modern Linguistic Science for Teachers of English" *College English*, VIII, 314-20. Reprinted in *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, XXXIII, 321-27.

But especially serious is Pei's attitude toward standard usage. With a deft introduction of the guilt-by-association theme, he says (p. 171): "A Russian linguistic congress in Moscow in 1930 defined language-purity as a mere fiction, reflecting at best a pedantic attitude, and at worst an attitude either aristocratic or chauvinistic. This point of view is shared by some American linguists who declare that 'language is what people speak, not what someone thinks they ought to speak.'" It is a point of view which Pei dislikes and which he chooses to misunderstand. With studied disregard of the scientific attitude toward usage as excellently presented by Professor John S. Kenyon,² he asserts that the idea that language is what people speak "gives *carte blanche* and free play to all slang, colloquialism and substandard forms."

This kind of error makes Pei's book especially bad in the eyes of those concerned with teaching reasonable discrimination in language use. Pei's book not only contains too many surprising errors but also belittles or ignores the applications of linguistic science which for many years teachers of usage have been trying to stress.

And if it is objected that any popularization would have the same weaknesses, then the answer appears in the just published *Leave Your Language Alone!* by Professor Robert A. Hall, Jr.³ Clear, sane, and highly readable, this book is paradoxically both popular and objective, both simple and scientifically sound. It is a powerful demonstration that the basic principles of modern linguistic science can be persuasively treated for the nontechnical reader. As an antidote for Pei's work it has special value in supporting the English teacher's case for linguistic objectivity in considering matters of usage.

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²J. S. Kenyon, "Cultural Levels and Functional Varieties of English," *College English*, X, 1-6; "Levels of Speech and Colloquial English," *English Journal*, XXXVII, 25-31.

³Ithaca, N.Y.: Linguistica, Inc., 1950.

Round Table

CO-OPERATIVE PLANNING IN THE COLLEGE CLASSROOM

"If men are to remain civilized or to become so, the art of associating together must grow and improve."

De Tocqueville was not looking at the schools of today, but his words should be a challenge to them, for where is there a better proving ground for democratic living than in the classroom? Democracy implies that all who are involved participate, that each individual has his own unique worth, and that the minority group deserves consideration. Here, if anywhere, co-operative planning—group process—the getting-together of individuals for the solving of their common problems, should improve learning.

For we know that no two persons are alike. Group process recognizes the individual to be important where he is and as he is. If at the moment he is a nonparticipant, then he may be helped to develop into an active, contributing member by direct experience.

Furthermore, group process has a sound basis in psychology, for we know that learning is effective when the learner sees and feels a purpose for the learning and that the amount of learning he gets is in direct proportion to what he sees in the process or to what he feels is important. The students who assist in the planning, who search out the problems to be solved, who suggest activities and delegate responsibilities, who evaluate, revise, and plan future activities in the light of what they have learned, will find the work more meaningful than those who have the plan handed out in a capsule at the first meeting of the class.

My students in English Composition 311 looked startled when I suggested some of the above ideas to them. They looked doubtful when I proposed that they assume as

much responsibility in the class as possible. But they responded eagerly when I suggested that we have an informal buzz session for the purpose of getting acquainted.

The group having counted off by fours, each student took his place in the circle assigned to his number. In the brief time allotted, he was to learn the names of the members of his group and information about home towns, hobbies, and special interests. After a sufficient interval two or three people from each circle progressed to the next and added new names to their lists.

Presently the students resumed their seats, and one student was asked to introduce to the class another whom he had just met. The second introduced a third, and he a fourth, until each member had been introduced and the first hurdle of speaking out before the class had been met. A feeling of belongingness had been established, and, from that time on, students sat with chairs in a circle, spoke for the most part without raising their hands to be recognized, and maintained an easy, informal atmosphere.

As co-operative planning was new to most of the class, we worked first on small projects, organizing ourselves into three or four groups, each with a chairman and a recorder, to study particular problems. They enjoyed a critical reading of one another's themes to find good examples of unity, coherence, and emphasis. In small groups we made a study of the four kinds of discourse, the group working on narration composing its example from the joint contributions of its personnel, the other groups contributing individual examples from each member. Some excellent work was done by committees in analyzing articles to discover methods of exposition; in studying character, atmosphere, and state of feeling in description; and in jointly building sentences —then paragraphs—for style.

After reports were made to the class as a whole, circular discussion was encouraged, the instructor being merely one of the group. We paused often to evaluate the process. Was time used well? Were purposes set out? Were ways and means of achieving purposes well chosen? Were responsibilities shared? Was there individual growth in assuming leadership? Was there tolerance in each group? (Because there was an extrovert in the group who enjoyed shocking his fellow-students, there was ample opportunity for the instructor to set an example in tolerance, in the right of each individual to be heard, and in the consideration of all opinions.)

Small-group membership varied. Sometimes the class cards were shuffled and dealt to make four or six committees. At other times people interested in the same subject matter worked together. Occasionally those majoring in the same area elected to solve common problems. At times the instructor put all those who had been leaders into a group, insuring emerging leadership from the remaining students. Sometimes friends chose to work together.

When the time approached for selecting topics for term papers, the class, again in small groups, discussed the purposes and chose subjects in terms of how they wished to use the paper. Again in groups, they practiced developing ideas, weaving them into paragraphs, and then reworking them for style.

Frequent evaluations were made by the students and the instructor. Some special discussions were held on the function of the group leader and the group recorder. An observer was added to each group and records kept of the number of contributions of each member and of "on-the-beam" or "off-the-beam" discussions.

Toward the end of the term the class members did the entire planning of the last unit, the instructor serving merely as a member of the group. They chose narration for the subject, deciding to have one group study the techniques of narration and analyze examples, one to write brief narra-

tives for criticism, one to read narratives for enjoyment and comparison, and one group to write a longer narrative. Each person then chose which one of the topics he wished to pursue. Almost daily, committees gave a summary of the work accomplished and made plans to accommodate progress. Frequently students evaluated the work done and their own growth as group members, attempting to correct weakness in process. Because the unit was planned by class members following the objectives they had set up, there was a better understanding of problems to be solved than there had been when the instructor planned for the class.

During the last two weeks, while the unit was under study, conferences were held with each member of the class at which time the student evaluated his experiences, his own growth as a group member, and the class as a whole. A frequent comment was that the last unit (class planned) had given the student more than any of the other work. Following the final reports on the unit, the class members evaluated anonymously the work of the instructor during the term.

From the written comments brought to the evaluation conference, the following are some of those which support the principles on which the experiment was based:

Group work gives the person who is backward and wants to learn a chance to express his views. He feels more at ease in a small group than in a large one.

I feel that group work not only assisted me with my subject matter but gave me valuable experience that I will be able to use in similar group situations in other subject fields of education.

This understanding of the other fellow's viewpoint should carry over into everyday life where it is most important to understand how others think and feel.

These were students with almost no previous training comparable to that experienced in this class. Students and instructor need to explore further the possi-

bilities of co-operative planning, but the above comments seem to support the belief that the co-operative interactive process develops people as individuals and improves their relations with one another.

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E. A. ROBINSON'S "MR. FLOOD'S
PARTY"

Because of the wide use of the Brooks, Purser, and Warren anthology, *An Approach to Literature*, it would be well to observe where that volume goes wrong in its note to the poem by E. A. Robinson, "Mr. Flood's Party." "Why is Eben Flood a drunkard?" the editors ask. The fact is that Eben Flood is not a drunkard. A drunkard is one who is habitually or frequently drunk. Robinson declares specifically that Flood drinks but seldom—perhaps just the once each year. "Well, Mr. Flood," the aged man tells himself over the jug, "we have not met like this / In a long time." The next words, as well, suggest that much time has elapsed between drinks: "and many a change has come / To both of us, I fear, since last it was / We had a drink together." Stanza 2 of the poem, indeed, suggests that it was a year ago when last Flood had drunk much liquor: "Well, Mr. Flood, we have the harvest moon / Again." Here, in the word "Again," is an indication that a full year has passed since Flood swigged his fill.

Further, four indirect but forceful indications disprove the slander of drunkenness. Sots rarely live to advanced age; pneumonia takes them off decently, if accident does not; and the very first word of the poem stresses the longevity of its protagonist. He is "old";

and age and heavy drinking are seldom twins. In the second place, as stanza 2 informs us, Flood's memory is excellent for one of his age; he is fond of quotations ("The bird is on the wing, the poet says") and remembers them easily. Now memory is almost the first quality sapped by dipsomania. Even Ray Milland forgot the bottle hidden in the chandelier. The true alcoholic, particularly if old, would be inclined to hum, haw, and stumble about the fourth word of any quotation. As a third evidence, we must not overlook the fact that the superannuated Mr. Flood has walked a considerable distance to secure "the jug he had gone so far to fill." No aged alcoholic could make such long trips. As a matter of fact, Mr. Flood seems remarkably healthy for his time of life, and one could feel him close both in his strength and in his liquid diet to a Bernard Shaw. Finally, we are told in the last stanza of the poem that the jug is exhausted, but Mr. Flood's only reaction is to shake his head regretfully. A booze-hound would have hastened (or staggered) back for more applejack. To Flood comes not even the thought of such a trek for replacements.

Actually, what we have in this poem is the usual but always sad theme of transience and death, the loneliness of old age bereft of friendship and understanding. Robinson has painted the figure of a man who, realizing that love and honor are no more his, nonetheless lives on steadily. He has not given way to the despair of drink. One jug once a year does not spell "drunkard." Mr. Flood is one of Robinson's defeated men, but he is defeated by longevity alone and not by frailty of character.

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Report and Summary

About Education

"NEW COLLEGES FOR A NEW AMERICA" by Dwayne Orton is a lead article for the annual education survey of the *Saturday Review of Literature* (September 9). Orton discusses the significance of the rapid growth of community colleges and their potentialities. In 1918, 4,504 students were enrolled in 46 junior colleges, now more commonly called "community colleges." In 1948-49, 465,815 were registered in 648. These colleges are indigenous to and peculiarly characteristic of America, Orton thinks. In this is their strength. In their strength also is the fact that they are not strait-jacketed by academic tradition but are "concerned with meeting human needs for educational services wherever they are found; at whatever age and status of previous education." Moreover, "they can directly apply the disciplines of scholarship and knowledge to the long-term needs of the community."

In "Education and Defense of America," another lead article in the same magazine, Ernest O. Melby projects the thesis that, if we are to survive as a free people, democracy must be revitalized at the community level. In this the community college can play an increasingly important role.

Of related interest are the findings of a survey presented by Leonard V. Koos in the June *Journal of Higher Education*. Koos writes on "Preparation for Community College Teaching." Of most significance to English teachers, perhaps, is his report of the prevalence of dual-level teaching, the fact that most community college teachers give instruction at both high school and post-high school levels. This, Koos thinks, is educationally preferable, "since intimate vertical articulation is thereby assured."

AN ARGUMENT FOR BETTER MODELS in the teaching of "Freshman English in the Liberal Arts Curriculum" is made by James Newcomer in the June *Journal of Higher Education*. He feels that the problems of freshman English cannot be solved in isolation but only in terms of the whole function of the college. He deplores the watering-down of much reading material in freshman texts—material chosen because it is "on the students' level" or "the kind they like"—and he reminds us that freshmen do not enrol in advanced science or mathematics classes without satisfying certain prerequisites and proving ability to master new material. He deplores also the limiting of freshman reading materials to current writing, because he thinks that it fosters a false confidence in the student of the worth of his own appraisals and "denies him the experience of elementary reasoning toward matured conclusions." And, finally, he states flatly that the English instructor of college freshmen "must deny the responsibility to entertain." All this is not from a teacher of college English but from a college dean, who concludes with the resounding metaphor: "If grammar and rhetoric are the plow and harrow, what is the use of shining them brightly unless they are used to till."

TO TEACHERS OF ENGLISH TO ENGINEERS, two articles in spring issues of the *Journal of Higher Education* will be of particular interest. G. G. Drake in "The Humanities in the Technological School" makes revolutionary suggestions for the freshman course. Stressing that the one particular quality which distinguishes the great engineer from the mediocre is his trained imagi-

nation, he suggests a one-year course divided into three terms. During one term, selections from great writers should be read aloud in class by the teacher. Outside of class the student should read four books, memorize some good poetry, and keep a notebook of the teacher's devising. The examination should take the form of at least one conversation with each student who comes with notebook in hand. Another term, Drake thinks, should be devoted to music, and a third term to philosophy. The teacher obviously has to be one well nourished by the arts and by philosophy. H. P. Hammond stresses the same need for real liberal arts teaching in "Contributions of the Liberal Arts to the Training of Engineers." He believes that if the points of view, interests, and background of engineering students are understood by the teacher, they can be led to do almost anything that liberal arts teachers may desire them to do.

A SYMPOSIUM ON "THE TEACHING and Study of Writing" appears in the spring *Western Review*. Among the questions discussed are: "How much can the art of writing serious poetry and fiction be taught?" and "Can anything of that art be taught through regular college programs in literature?" The participants are Allen Tate, Eudora Welty, Walter Van Tilburg Clark, Malcolm Cowley, and Wallace Stegner. The editor, Ray B. West, Jr., acts as a kind of moderator. They vary in their opinions but agree generally that certain fundamentals of writing can be consciously learned by the writer, but the "art" is something else again. They also agree that the regular branches of the English department can supply writing students with a disciplined course of reading, with the end results supposedly the maturing of ideas and the developing of literary taste.

FRIENDLY COUNSEL IS GIVEN TO young teachers, and to those who are preparing them, by Mentor L. Williams in "They Want To Be College English Teachers" (March *Journal of Higher Education*).

Williams presents a lively and frank appraisal of the facts of academic life. After discussing the problems caused by the present overcrowding in the field, he emphasizes that versatility is a prime requisite of today's applicant for a teaching position. He cautions that candidates should not be "specialty conscious" but have at least two strings to their bows. Every candidate must expect a certain amount of drudgery in connection with committee work and must be patient about promotion. The rewards of teaching are likely to come more quickly at a small college in the hinterland than at a large university.

GOOD COUNSEL ALSO IS GIVEN TO aspiring scholarly authors by the late R. B. McKerrow and H. M. Silver in the April *PMLA*. They discuss different aspects of "Form and Matter in the Publication of Research." McKerrow's article "On the Publication of Research" is a reprint of his classic first published in 1940, originating in his experiences as the editor of the *Review of English Studies*. Silver makes useful suggestions about "Putting It on Paper." Reprints of these two articles bound together may be had from the Modern Language Association.

COLLEGE ENGLISH READERS WHO enjoyed Professor H. L. Creek's "The Seven Ages of Professor Christopher Trimmer" (February, 1945) will be glad to know that Trimmer has returned to life in the pages of the spring *Bulletin of the American Association of University Professors*. Under the title, "Head of the Department," he there discusses with two other heads of English departments the vicissitudes to be met "between the devil of the administration and the deep sea of the staff."

VARIOUS PROBLEMS IN CONNECTION with "The Organization of College Reading Programs" are discussed by Robert M. Bear in the May *Education*. Some of the questions raised are: Administratively who shall be responsible for such programs? How

shall special help in reading be provided? Which students should be included? Bear also analyzes institutional relations and the reading program and the operational problems of special classes, clinics, and laboratories. He cites numerous examples of the different ways different colleges have handled these, but his own advice about setting up a reading program is that, instead of trying to acquire a blueprint, it is better for an inquiring administrator to find a qualified person or select one of his instructors to get the training and then aid this one while he builds a program in terms of the situation on that campus. He cautions especially against the type of program that depends upon one specific feature or that stresses a single technique or skill.

THE QUESTION "DOES PUBLIC Speaking Teach Written Usage?" is answered in the affirmative by Louis Hall Swain in the April *Quarterly Journal of Speech*. Swain describes an experiment conducted to discover how much the practice of public speaking affects the *recognition* of those errors in written composition that are commonly referred to as "usage." The method employed was to test and retest ninety-eight students before and after each course, four times altogether: (1) before taking Freshman English (101), first quarter; (2) after taking English 101 and before taking English 102 and 103; (3) after completing English 102 and 103 but before taking the basic quarter course in public speaking; and (4) after completing basic public speaking. He summarizes the results as follows. Four testings of ninety-eight students, using "Part I: Usage" of the American Council Co-operative English Test, Form PM, disclosed significant progress during public speaking in learning to recognize several aspects of written style *not* treated in the public speaking course. On the grammar-diction section of the test, three-fifths of the students showed higher gains during the one quarter of sophomore public speaking than they had during all three quarters of freshman English; on the sections on

punctuation, capitalization, and sentence structure, about three-tenths showed higher gains during public speaking.

"IS ANYBODY LISTENING," THE first of a series of articles on "Communications," appears in the September *Fortune*. The widening gap between business and the rest of society is strongly troubling a good many people. As one man put it, "The breakdown of communication is surprising and shocking in a country so rich as ours in the media of transmission." The article analyzes the reasons for this breakdown by discussing such questions as: Is business talking too much? Can you merchandise a concept as you do a concrete article? Is the propaganda approach to communication a fruitless diversion of effort? Why is misinformation so resistant to information? Why even in informal communication are our best-intentioned efforts so often misinterpreted? How do we get congeniality between speaker and audience? One answer which is made patently clear is that most people do too much explaining and not nearly enough listening. The communications problems discussed are basic, not merely those of business relationships, and use of the article could stimulate good classroom discussion and sharply focus the utilitarian value of possessing a command of the language arts. The *Fortune* article is for laymen, but it parallels closely the thesis of a difficult and provocative new book, *The Human Use of Human Beings*, by Norbert Wiener, who stresses that "society can only be understood through a study of the messages and communications that belong to it."

A PLAN TO HELP IMPROVE HUMAN relations is set forth in the summer *Yale Review* by Arthur Klein in his article "The Challenge of Mass Media." Klein points out that at this particular time in history, when the need for mass intelligence is more acute than it has ever been, we have undertaken no *concerted* action to use the media of mass communication for truly educational and informative purposes. Anything that has

been done has been spasmodic and haphazard. He urges the setting-up of a "National Film Commission" and "National Radio and Television Networks" and a group of projects sponsored jointly by them and the industries involved. He warns that, "unless we act now to reform our mass media, they will almost certainly succeed in wholly deforming us."

THOSE INTERESTED IN ESTABLISHING community little theaters or the problems of local amateur play-producing will find the *Wisconsin Idea Theatre Quarterly* a

magazine which treats such subjects on the practical, "grass-roots" level. Although "devoted to the idea of a people's theater in Wisconsin," the magazine is largely concerned with topics general to all little-theater groups. One dollar per year from the Wisconsin Idea Theatre, 1327 University Avenue, University of Wisconsin, Madison.

THE PROGRESSIVE BROADCASTING System, a new coast-to-coast radio network catering to smaller stations, plans to begin operations around November 1. The network has applications from 228 stations.

About Literature

"LETTERS TO A YOUNG POET" IN the September *Poetry* illustrate the point frequently made by Ezra Pound's admirers that one of his great contributions to poetry was his encouragement of young writers. The letters printed here were written in 1916 to an aspiring British poetess, Iris Barry. The new managing editor of *Poetry* is Evalyn Shapiro, wife of the new editor the poet Karl Shapiro. She replaces Marion Strobel, with whose name the readers and contributors to *Poetry* have been familiar for many years. Wallace Fowlie is now listed on the masthead as an advisory editor.

SINCE CHRISTOPHER FRY'S NEW verse play, *The Lady's Not for Burning*, is being produced by John Gielgud on Broadway this fall, an article by William Arrowsmith in the summer *Hudson Review* is timely. Arrowsmith writes on English verse drama in general and Fry's in particular. He comes to the interesting conclusion that Fry's greatest achievement is his verse, that his plays hold their audience not by their dramatic content but by the intent and sound of his language.

LIFE AND LETTERS, EDITED BY Robert Herring, for the last fifteen years has opened its hospitable pages to the new writers of every country. As a continuation

of the *London Mercury*, it had a literary prestige to uphold, and even through the last war it managed to do so. In June, like *Horizon* six months previously, it quietly suspended publication. Rising costs were the reason. A few copies of the past year's special issues on the contemporary writings of China, India, Italy, Sweden, and Persia are still available. Address: Brenden Publishing Company, Ltd., 430 Strand, London, WC 2.

THE JULY QUARTERLY REVIEW (British) contains fourteen pages of Sir Shane Leslie's urbane reflections on "The Art of Canned Biography." The main subject is the recently published British *Dictionary of National Biography, 1931-1940*, which, as Leslie remarks, "covers a great deal of the national fame which has missed Westminster Abbey and Madame Tussaud's Waxworks." He discusses many of the literary problems which beset a biographer in a manner which would make his article helpful to students.

THE SUMMER CORNHILL MAGAZINE (British) includes a delightful essay by Margaret Lane on "Mr. Nicholls," Charlotte Brontë's husband of less than a year before her death. It sheds considerable light on Miss Brontë and also brings her husband out of eclipse. The same magazine

contains a new essay by W. Somerset Maugham on Zurbarán, a fifteenth-century Spanish painter. Although it is biography rather than fiction, its intensity is similar to *The Moon and Sixpence*, and the writing is Maugham at his best.

"NOVEL WRITING IS MY TRADE" by Vardis Fisher appears in the August *Tomorrow*. Since he is primarily an historical novelist, Fisher discusses in some detail his methods in acquiring and using facts. He feels strongly that discipline and the love of truth are the same in both scholarship and art. A good reference article for students.

THE MILWAUKEE JOURNAL, ONE-time Pulitzer prize winner, is analyzed in two articles by Llewellyn White in *The Reporter* (August 29 and September 12). Founded by Lucius Nieman, for whom the Nieman Foundation for Journalism at Harvard is named, the *Journal* is now the only metropolitan daily in the United States really owned by its staff. More copies of it are sold in New York City than copies of the *New York Times* in all Wisconsin. White pulls the *Journal* apart and in so doing reveals a good deal of how a newspaper gets to be what it is. Journalism students can learn from it.

AN AMUSING NOTE ON HENRY James also appears in the summer *Sewanee Review*, where B. R. McElderry describes how Henry James collaborated with eleven popular writers of the day on a serial for a woman's magazine. This was issued in *Harper's Bazaar* in 1906-7 under the title "The Whole Family" and was published in book form the next year. After discussing the results of the composite authorship, McElderry concludes that, considering the grace, conscience, and good humor with which James participated, it is obvious that the stereotype of him as an austere artist can be pushed too far.

POETRY NOTES: A TRANSLATION OF a poem by Lorca, generally considered the

greatest Spanish poet, and an extended explication by Warren Carrier appear in the spring *Accent*. The three chief themes of Spanish literature, Carrier says, are honor, violence, and death; and he shows how these form the substance and meaning of Lorca's poetry. Another detailed explication, and this of a poem much taught, is Leonard Unger's "Keats and the Music of Autumn," in the summer *Western Review*. Unger's chief point is that, although the *Ode to Autumn* is shorter than Keats's other odes and less complex in its materials, it has the peculiar distinction of great compression achieved in simple terms, and he shows how and why.

IN THE SPRING ISSUE OF *MEASURE* Wallace Fowlie states that the writers who are most read in France today are Gide, Claudel, Bernanos, Saint-Exupéry, Malraux, Apollinaire, and Rimbaud, but he notes also that "American literature is being read with almost passionate interest" and suggests that this may lead to a fuller mutual understanding between the two countries. Quite the opposite view is taken by the English anthropologist, Geoffrey Gorer, in the *Partisan Review* (July-August), who there discusses "The Erotic Myth of America." American movies have, of course, contributed to the begetting of this myth, but, according to Gorer, it derives also from the works of Faulkner, Cain, Hammett, Chandler, and Hemingway, their imitators, and their followers, all of whom are widely read in England and on the Continent. This myth which has arisen envisions the United States as a sort of Abbaye de Thélème, in which there are endless opportunities to indulge not only all one's erotic but also one's sadistic day-dreams. Two authors who are currently achieving enormous sales for their day-dreams of Thélème in the United States are René Raymond in England (pseudonym James Hadley Chase) and Boris Vian, who purports to translate an American author, "Vernon Sullivan," in France. Gorer outlines the plots of some of their novels, which are outrageously ridiculous and which are almost completely congruent with the anti-

American propaganda put out by the Nazi and Soviet propaganda machines. It is this myth, Gorler states with great positiveness, which is an important component in the fear which many Europeans feel concerning the spread of American culture and influence.

"WHATEVER THE MISDEEDS AND misfortunes of Ezra Pound, his service to literature has been signal," says Robert A. Hume in the summer issue of *English*. Hume attempts a dispassionate analysis of Pound's contribution to poetry. This contribution, he feels, centers mainly around the poet's part in the "conscious revolt against the lingering influence of Tennyson and 'that doddard Palgrave'" and his part in the re-discovery and popularization of the older and exotic poetic forms which revitalized subsequent poetry. In such a role Pound became a poet's poet who is important for his influence on poets of his own and successive generations.

The early poems, produced under the sway of one or another of his enthusiasms for unusual techniques, are important for the germinal effect on other writers, but even these, according to Hume, display an "uncatalogued quality" and lack coherent synthesis. Also apparent was a concern with form at the expense of that appraisal of mankind which great poets always include in their works.

The *Cantos* were evidently Pound's attempt at a major work which would combine his technical skills and his ideas into a unified whole. But the *Cantos* do not do this. Hume feels that even the most sympathetic reading of these poems will provide no visible design or unity either of effect or of technique. Such reading "seems to prove not that Pound successfully fused the varying influences that bore upon him in his novitiate, but that he became victim to the spacious dispersal of his enthusiasms," and this despite numerous flashes of excellent poetry. Discussing the ideological failure of the *Cantos* as well as Pound's failure as a man, the writer denies any poet's right to denounce humanity without first "fully enter-

ing into it by intensity of insight and emotion." Pound, lacking the greatness to realize the human predicament, was naturally unable to express it adequately. His contributions, then, are limited to "his fearless battlings on behalf of literature old and new, . . . his passionate endorsement of all who, over a long period of years, were trying to write clearly and honestly, and . . . that impressive handful of brief, separate poems sounding his own distinct voice while exquisitely echoing voices of the talented and half-forgotten dead."

IN "PARADOXES IN POETRY," ALSO in the summer *English*, Gordon Symes discusses the contention of the New Critics that a paradoxical element is necessary in all good poetry. Although warning against the folly of reading in paradoxes where none were intended, the writer agrees with the New Critics, provided that by "paradoxical" one means unexpected. A poem which in all ways conforms to the expectations of the reader is called a bad poem. "Poetry ought continually to arouse, arrest, unsettle, stimulate, and shock (in the electrical, not moral sense), and paradox might be used as a convenient summary of the poetic resources available for these purposes." Uses of paradox in structure, imagery, and ideological content are set forth.

"THE 'INDISPENSABLE' CENTURY" is, according to Joseph Wood Krutch's leading article in the *Saturday Review of Literature* for September 2, not the seventeenth but the eighteenth. He grants that after Victorianism writers had much to learn from Donne and his contemporaries. Paradox and resultant obscurity have gone far enough—too far in second-rate writers. Now such crystal clarity as that of Swift and some of his contemporaries would be a better subject of study by our authors and critics.

IN AUGUST HARVARD UNIVERSITY Summer School was host to a conference of distinguished American poets, with a few Europeans. Nothing short of a volume reporting the proceedings could give any ade-

quate notion of the variety of topics and opinions, but Stephen Spender's report in the *New York Times Book Review* for September 3 gives some interesting snatches. Peter Viereck, who is to be one of the chief speakers at the NCTE convention, and John Ciardi, who will contribute a *College English* critical article this winter, were participants.

"TRYING TO WRITE" BY CARL Sandburg in the September *Atlantic Monthly* will bring him freshly to mind for the persons who heard him at the Buffalo Convention. In writing of the processes of creation, he here, as in speaking of the making of poetry, gives one imaginative example after the other to distil its essence. He ends: "I am still studying verbs and the mystery of how they connect nouns. I am more suspicious of adjectives than at any other time in all my born days. . . . All my life I have been trying to learn to read, to see and hear, and to write."

THE TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY issue of the *Virginia Quarterly Review* quietly injects into the general discussion of a troubled world several articles which offer encouragement. The South has had experience in reconstruction problems! For teachers of English the most pertinent of these is Gerald W. Johnson's "Old Nick." Johnson (author of the current *Incredible Tale*) went to Wake Forest College when it was still struggling to rise above the disabilities put upon it by the Civil War. "Old Nick" was Johnson's "English teacher" and also "a fashioner of men." Through Johnson's affectionate description of "Old Nick" and his "methods" we get a very clear picture of the contribution made by southern teachers in "reknitting the raveled country" south of the Mason and Dixon line and in cultivating the spirit in a land in which it was bitterly hard for men to get enough to eat. As Johnson points out, "Had the teachers failed, the United States would have had below the Potomac a bigger, bitterer Alsace-Lorraine, Poland, Ireland." In the same issue H. C.

Nixon, in "Southern Regionalism Limited," makes clear through many specific illustrations that the force of regionalism and regional consciousness in the South is less than many seem to think, that the South's expanding crop of social scientists and social workers contains members who are carrying on teachings and activities far in advance of the views espoused by the office-holding liberals, and that even some of the rough edges of segregation are wearing off, as when, last November, at the annual meeting of the Southern Historical Association at Williamsburg the scholars of the South were addressd by John Hope Franklin, Negro scholar of Howard University, on "The Martial Spirit of the Old South."

TWO STUDIES OF JOHN DOS PASSOS—one by Granville Hicks and the other by Martin Kallich—appear in the spring *Antioch Review*. Hicks discusses the evolution of the novelist's political thinking as it is shown in his writings, from undergraduate articles in the *Harvard Monthly* right through *Grand Design*. Thirty years ago Dos Passos was a romantic rebel. Subsequently he became a Communist. Today he defends the profit motive, quarrels not merely with communism but with the New Deal, looks with dismay at the program of the British Labour party, and finds in Senator Taft the qualities he thinks America needs. Because the vitality of the writing of Dos Passos has derived from his ability to depict social change, the fact that he has become conservative accounts in large measure, Hicks thinks, for the decline of his literary mastery. However, the article ends on a hopeful note. Since the courage of Dos Passos, "his honesty and fundamental generosity of spirit remain," Hicks believes that he may yet recover his literary strength. In "Liberty and the Father-Image" Kallich ascribes this flux in the social philosophy of Dos Passos to a form of psychological compensation for oppressive parental authority, real or imagined, and points to an almost complete suppression of the father-image in his creative works.

New Books

College Teaching Materials

LANGUAGE . . . MAN . . . SOCIETY: READINGS IN COMMUNICATION. By HAROLD E. BRIGGS. Rinehart & Co. \$3.50.

In his Preface Dr. Briggs states clearly the *raison d'être* of his collection: "that we should become aware of the processes involved [in communication] . . . that we should acquire a technique for analyzing these processes, form a proper ideal of the purposes for which they ought to be used, and develop our ability to use them."

While the user of the book will recognize its "concern with language particularly and communication generally," the inquiring student cannot but be stimulated by the wealth of ideas influencing modern thought and activity contained in the wide variety of selections chosen. Knowledge of language itself and of the dynamic nature of communication is revealed both directly and indirectly throughout the book. The sections on "Language and Childhood," "Language and Thought," "Semantics, Pro and Con," and "The Law and Lawyers" deal most directly with the nature and function of language. "Science," "Literature and the Arts," "Media of Communication," "Radio Productions," and "TVA—Arguments Pro and Con," which constitute the remaining sections of the book, introduce the student to dynamic contemporary ideas and problems affecting the individual and society.

The selections in the book represent not only a cross-section of current thought but also a variety of types and styles of writing and speaking: research paper, report, article, congressional hearing, newspaper account, round-table discussion, essay, and biography. For each selection the author has included in a final section of the book suggestions for study and discussion. The suggestions contain comments and questions pertaining both to language study and to critical analysis and evaluation of the ideas. These relate not only to a specific passage but also to other related passages that present simi-

lar or divergent points of view. As a result the questions are provocative of both further thought and discussion.

Language . . . Man . . . Society is intended for use in both regular freshman English courses and communication courses. The teacher who wishes to employ the "study of language" approach to the teaching of communication will find this book well worth consideration. The teacher who wishes to employ a functional concern with ideas as an approach to teaching more effective communication will likewise be interested in this collection of readings. In neither instance will the book provide the instructor and student with a text which can be used in a traditional or routine manner. Use of it will require imaginative and creative planning on the part of the teacher and a well-motivated inquiry on the part of the student. To get the most benefit from its study, the student will probably need ample class discussion of the concepts and ideas presented in the selections, for many of them are on a high average or difficult level of reading. Whether a teacher chooses it as a text for his classes or not, however, *Language . . . Man . . . Society* is a significant collection of readings on language and about important ideas current in much of our communication and so is a book with which teachers of English should be familiar.

RALPH C. LEYDEN

CHAIRMAN, COMMUNICATIONS DIVISION
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STUDIES IN POETRY: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE CRITICAL READING OF POEMS. By NEAL FRANK DOUBLEDAY. New York: Harper, 1949. Pp. 380. \$2.25.

Within the last decade or so the teaching of poetry has been revolutionized by the explocatory approach. Almost every major institution has either adopted it officially or included it among the pedagogical techniques of its fresh-

man or sophomore English courses. It has, furthermore, penetrated into advanced and even graduate study: the profession seems now to be more concerned with developing reading skills than imparting bodies of historical information about literature.

This newest volume in the fine series of texts which have appeared to serve the explicationary approach is, I believe, unique in arrangement and content. It consists of thirty-nine chapters, each containing about four poems, with every poem followed by study questions that stress certain aspects of poetical technique or theory. Early chapters, for example, point to "The Poem as It Unites Us" and "The Poem as Statement." The emphasis then shifts to more specifically technical matters, with chapters on imagery, allusion, metaphor, irony, meter, etc. With chapter xvii the emphasis shifts again to types and problems, somewhat loosely co-ordinated. Two chapters on narrative poems and ballads are followed by chapters dealing with "Character in Poems," "A Browning Group," "Lyrics," "The Sonnet Form," "Satire," "Herrick and Marvell," "Man and Nature," religion, social justice, parody, innovation, and myth. This variety of approaches, which mixes problems and subjects somewhat indiscriminately, is marked by a doubtless predictable absence of critical theory.

The study questions certainly imply explication and criticism, but they do not go beyond asking the questions that will lead students to careful literal readings of the poems. Of Pope's portrait of Atticus, for a random example, which is presented in the chapter on satire, the questions are: "What is there about Pope's approach that would make this passage very difficult to answer?" "Do you recognize some of the characteristics attributed to Atticus as belonging to persons of your acquaintance?" "How often is there an antithesis within single lines?" Doubleday's tastes are catholic. His volume contains a good deal of metaphysical poetry—both seventeenth century and modern—but does not neglect the Romantic and Victorian periods, which are represented by both English and American poems.

Studies in Poetry will be used, it appears, for freshman classes, where the instructor will have opportunity to provide his own framework of poetical theory and evaluation.

CHARLES CHILD WALCUTT

WASHINGTON AND JEFFERSON COLLEGE

REPRINTS

"MODERN LIBRARY COLLEGE EDITIONS": *CRIME AND PUNISHMENT*. Introduction by ERNEST J. SIMMONS. *DAVID COPPERFIELD*. Introduction by E. K. BROWN. *THE DIVINE COMEDY*. Introduction by C. H. GRANDJEAN. *EIGHT FAMOUS ELIZABETHAN PLAYS*. Edited by ESTHER CLOUDMAN DUNN. *ESSAYS AND OTHER WRITINGS OF EMERSON*. Edited with an Introduction by BROOKS ATKINSON. *FATHER AND SONS*. Introduction by HERBERT J. MULLER. *FAUST*. Introduction by VICTOR LANGE. *GULLIVER'S TRAVELS*. Introduction by ROBERT B. HEILMAN. *HENRY ESMOND*. Introduction by GORDON N. RAY. *THE ILIAD*. Introduction by GILBERT HIGHET. *JANE EYRE*. Introduction by WILLIAM PEDEN. *JOSEPH ANDREWS*. Introduction by HOWARD MUMFORD JONES. *MADAME BOVARY*. Introduction by HENRI PEYRE. *THE MAYOR OF CASTERBRIDGE*. Introduction by SAMUEL C. CHEW. *PLAYS BY MOLIÈRE*. Introduction by FRANCIS FERGUSSON. *THE ODYSSEY*. Introduction by GILBERT HIGHET. *THE ORDEAL OF RICHARD FEVEREL*. Introduction by LIONEL STEVENSON. *PÈRE GORIOT and EUGÉNIE GRANDET*. Introduction by E. K. BROWN. *PRIDE AND PREJUDICE and SENSE AND SENSIBILITY*. Introduction by DAVID DAICHES. *THE PRINCE AND THE DISCOURSES*. Introduction by MAX LERNER. *SEVEN FAMOUS GREEK PLAYS*. Introductions by WHITNEY J. OATES and EUGENE O'NEILL, JR. *A TALE OF TWO CITIES*. Introduction by EDWARD WAGENKNECHT. *TOM JONES*. Introduction by GEORGE SHERBURN. *TRISTRAM SHANDY*. Introduction by BERGEN EVANS. *WALDEN AND OTHER WRITINGS*. Introduction by BROOKS ATKINSON. *THE WAY OF ALL FLESH*. Introduction by MORTON DAUWEN ZABEL. *WORDSWORTH, SELECTED POETRY*. Edited with an Introduction by MARK VAN DOREN. *WUTHERRING HEIGHTS*. Introduction by ROYAL A. GETTMANN. Paper. \$0.65 each.

The text of these editions is uniform with the standard "Modern Library" volumes. In almost every case the college edition adds a new introduction by a scholar and a selected bibliography, which in some volumes is descriptive.

COLLEGE ENGLISH

JANE EYRE. By CHARLOTTE BRONTË. Introduction by JOE LEE DAVIS. Pp. 525. *THE PRAIRIE.* By JAMES FENIMORE COOPER. Introduction by HENRY NASH SMITH. Pp. 454. *RALPH WALDO EMERSON: SELECTED PROSE AND POETRY.* Introduction by REGINALD L. COOK. Pp. 485. *HENRY JAMES: SELECTED SHORT STORIES.* Introduction by QUENTIN ANDERSON. Pp. 317. *NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE: SELECTED TALES AND SKETCHES.* Introduction by HYATT H. WAGGONER. Pp. 410. Each \$0.75. *GREAT ENGLISH AND AMERICAN ESSAYS.* Edited by DOUGLAS S. MEAD. Pp. 273. Rinehart. \$0.50. Paper.

DOCTOR FAUSTUS. By CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE. Edited by PAUL H. KOCHER. Pp. 61. *JOHN KEATS: SELECTED POEMS.* Edited by GEORGE H. FORD. Pp. 114. *SAMSON AGONISTES AND SHORTER POEMS.* By JOHN MILTON. Edited by A. E. BARKER. Pp. 114. *WILLIAM WORDSWORTH: SELECTED POEMS.* Edited by GEORGE W. MEYER. Pp. 116. *THE WOULD-BE INVALID.* By MOLIÈRE. Translated and edited by MORRIS BISHOP. Appleton-Century-Crofts. Each \$0.35. Paper.

ADOLPHE AND THE RED NOTE-BOOK. By BENJAMIN CONSTANT. Introduction by HAROLD NICOLSON. Pp. 152. *PRIDE AND PREJUDICE.* By JANE AUSTEN. Pp. 386. *A WOMAN'S LIFE.* By GUY DE MAUPASSANT. Pp. 251. Pantheon Books. Each \$1.25.

Three new volumes in the new "Novel Library," well printed, with stiff board covers delightfully designed.

JONATHAN SWIFT. SELECTED PROSE WORKS. Edited with an Introduction by JOHN HAYWARD. Chanticleer Press. Pp. 483. \$2.00.

Selections restricted to those of his writings which can be enjoyed without a commentary. Comprises examples of his prose from every period of his career with the exception of political treatises and private correspondence.

THE OPIUM EATER AND SELECTIONS FROM THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY BY THOMAS DE QUINCEY. Edited with an Introduction by EDWARD SACKVILLE-WEST. Pp. 340. *A SPORTSMAN'S NOTEBOOK BY IVAN TURGENEV.* Translated by CHARLES and NATASHA HEPBURN. Pp. 398. *THE VOYAGES OF CAPTAIN COOK.* Selected and edited by CHRISTOPHER LLOYD. Pp. 384. Chanticleer Press. Each \$2.00.

Professional

THE PREPARATION OF COLLEGE TEACHERS. Edited by THEODORE C. BLEGEN and RUSSELL M. COOPER. Washington: American Council on Education. Pp. 186. \$1.75.

The real significance of *The Preparation of College Teachers* is that a conference sponsored by the American Council on Education and the United States Office of Education and composed chiefly of college and university administrators firmly called for some specific effort to prepare college teachers and placed the responsibility for this effort on the graduate schools as an integral part of work for advanced degrees.

The seven talks and six work-group reports canvass the need, the qualities to be encouraged, and some means of cultivating these, and summarize existing programs. A table notes 226 courses in thirty-nine institutions now discussing procedures in higher education (and at that missed some in special departments). The

fields of the work groups show the analysis of the problem guiding the conference: "Recruitment and Selection," "Academic Preparation," "The Dissertation," "Knowledge of Teaching Problems," "Apprenticeship," and "Institutional Programs."

The participants raise the right questions and in general suggest modestly the direction of answers rather than dogmatic solutions. They ask for varied and flexible programs, under the auspices of graduate schools, which apparently would work through existing subject-matter departments and would draw on but not be subservient to departments of education.

The book makes it unnecessary to accumulate further laments on the status of college teaching or to pile up pious intentions that "something must be done." Its summary of current discussion (and the blessing it carries of the deans of numerous graduate schools) makes it possible and even imperative that in-

stitutions and individuals within them go ahead. The College Section of the National Council has already had programs on this subject and has a committee at work, and at least the composition side of college English departments is taking the lead in preparing college teachers. The report is a convenient starting point for actual effort by practicing teachers.

PORTER G. PERRIN

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

THE HEEL OF ELOHIM: SCIENCE AND VALUES IN MODERN AMERICAN POETRY. By HYATT HOWE WAGGONER. University of Oklahoma Press. Pp. 235. \$3.00.

Something is happening today that throws new light on religious, and so on all, values, Waggoner believes. Poetry has survived science, and religion is not safely dead. The title is taken from Hart Crane's *The Bridge*: "Elohim, still I hear thy sounding heel!" with Elohim meaning Lord. Waggoner has written a philosophical, not ideological, criticism in which he examines the works of six poets against the background of modern science and philosophy "on the assumption that ideally and ultimately 'content' and 'form' in poetry are one." Some of his chapter headings indicate his conclusions: "E. A. Robinson: The Cosmic Chill"; "Robert Frost, The Strategic Retreat"; "T. S. Eliot: At the Still Point"; "Robinson Jeffers, Here Is Reality"; "Archibald MacLeish: The Undigested Mystery"; "Hart Crane: Beyond All Sesames of Science." Waggoner is a Christian humanist who makes a strong case for the revival of humanistic values in literature.

MILTON'S IMAGERY. By THEODORE HOWARD BANKS. Columbia University Press. Pp. 260. \$3.50.

A study of Milton's imagery for the purpose of illuminating Milton's personality rather than his art. Banks groups the images generally under six headings: "London, Public Life," "London, Private Life," "Travel and War," "Nature," "Animals," and "Books and Learning." He finds, for example, in the first group, that the early works are filled with royalist imageries eulogistic in tone, whereas in later works these become derogatory. Throughout the book, from the analysis offered, it is apparent that Milton's mind moved freely both in the world of experience and in the world of books.

THE TRANSCENDENTALISTS: AN ANTHOLOGY. Edited by PERRY MILLER. Harvard University Press. Pp. 521. \$6.00.

A selection of writings by members of the Transcendentalist group (excluding almost entirely both Emerson and Thoreau) arranged to tell the story of the major phases of the movement. Many of the articles, essays, poems, and addresses printed here are unavailable except in fugitive publications and in scattered libraries, so that Miller has done us a service in making them available in one volume. Such persons as Margaret Fuller, George Ripley, Bronson Alcott, and William Ellery Channing were the religious, political, and economic radicals of their day, and their achievement as a group has a particular pertinence today.

JOHN DRYDEN. By DAVID NICHOL SMITH. Cambridge University Press. Pp. 92. \$1.75.

Professor Smith, who obviously relishes Dryden, delivered the four Clark Lectures on English Literature at Cambridge University in 1948-49. They are here printed as they were given except for a few footnotes. By discussing first the early verse and criticism, then the plays, satires, and religious poems, and, finally, the translations, odes, and fables, he traces Dryden's career and draws from his works a discriminating portrait of an artist at work.

W. SOMERSET MAUGHAM: A BIBLIOGRAPHY. Compiled by KLAUS JONAS. Mount Holyoke College (South Hadley, Mass.). Pp. 97.

A useful guide to Maugham's many and varied writings both in English and in translation, in book and in periodical, to the films based on his works, and to critical articles about them all. Illustrated.

JOSEPH SPENCE. By AUSTIN WRIGHT. University of Chicago Press. Pp. 265. \$4.00.

THE ENGLISH DIODATIS. By DONALD C. DORIAN. Rutgers University Press. Pp. 365. \$5.00.

Joseph Spence and Charles Diodati are each known best as the friend of a famous poet. Spence, as Pope's friend and the author of the *Anecdotes*, should have written his biography. Milton describes Diodati and himself as "friends from Boyhood up, friends as close as e'er men were." Both Spence and Diodati, however, as

these two volumes show, were men of stature who had their own rightful places in the life of their times.

POEMS BY CHRISTOPHER SMART. Edited by ROBERT BRITTAINE. Princeton University Press. \$4.00. Pp. 324.

THE COLLECTED POEMS OF CHRISTOPHER SMART. Edited with an Introduction and critical comments by NORMAN CALLAN. 2 vols. Harvard University Press. \$5.00.

This eighteenth-century poet was an enigmatic person whose imagination hovered incessantly on the border line between insanity and genius. He was a devotional lyricist who is best known for his "A Song to David." Brittain's critical edition is an eclectic one. He includes about a hundred poems, with extensive notes and bibliography, and five illustrations. Print and paper are excellent. By contrast, Callan's edition in "The Muses's Library" includes all of Smart's poetry except the translations, and the editor's critical comments are confined to the Introduction. The two Callan volumes are pocket-sized, the print clear but small.

SERGEANT SHAKESPEARE. By DUFF COOPER. Viking. Pp. 96. \$2.50.

Duff Cooper obviously loves Shakespeare. He was prompted to speculate on the hidden years of the poet's life, got struck with an idea, reread all the plays, and in this gracefully written essay explores, chiefly on the basis of internal evidence in the plays, the possibility of Shakespeare having spent his early twenties in the English army instead of holding horses' heads in front of London theaters. Persuasive and plausible and definitely informative about Shakespeare's military metaphors.

TESS IN THE THEATRE. By MARGUERITE ROBERTS. University of Toronto Press. Pp. 225. \$4.00.

A history of a half-century on the stage of Hardy's novel *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, with the texts of the significant dramatic versions.

JAMES THOMSON (B. V.). By IMOGENE B. WALKER. Cornell University Press. Pp. 212. \$2.50.

A critical study of the Victorian author best known for his *The City of Dreadful Night*. There is currently a revival of interest in his writings, to which the Bibliography of this volume might well be a guide.

JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE: APOSTLE OF GERMAN CULTURE IN AMERICA. By JOHN WESLEY THOMAS. John W. Luce Co. Pp. 168. \$2.75.

Unpublished family papers provide much of the source material for this study of the influence of German culture upon the famous New England editor, minister, and author, and of the manner in which he aided in the diffusion of German culture in this country.

DE PROFUNDIS. By OSCAR WILDE. With an Introduction by VVYVAN HOLLAND. Philosophical Library. Pp. 148. \$3.00.

The first complete, accurate, and unexpurgated edition of the last prose work of Oscar Wilde in English. In his Introduction Holland describes the stormy history of the manuscript written by Wilde while in prison.

RADIO, TELEVISION, AND SOCIETY. By CHARLES A. SIEPMANN. Oxford University Press. 1950. Pp. 410. \$4.75.

Professor Siepmann examines radio and television in its social setting, against the crisis of our time, and amid the struggle for the allegiance of men's minds. The reader is led through a discussion of the nature of the problems to which radio and television give rise, through an appraisal of the responsibilities of the industry and of the listeners and the viewers, and through a careful study of the relation of these media to such matters as propaganda, free speech, and education.

The profession of education, says the author, "has allowed a revolution to creep up on it, the nature and consequence of which it has to date largely overlooked." This volume should go far to show us how the schools and the church, which for centuries have enjoyed a virtual monopoly in the interpretation and transmission of cultural values, have now lost that monopoly to the stiff and enterprising competition of the mass media of communication for the attention and loyalty of both young and old. Siepmann contends: "The teaching world has failed thus

far either to avail itself extensively of these media or to acquaint itself with their cultural effects and provide proper antidotes where these run counter to educational objectives."

The book presents all the facts concerning the advertisers' control of programs and the difficulties of changing this, without telling the reader what conclusion to reach. The effect of the survey of the facts concerning radio's development, its present status, and the people's needs is to curb the impatience of the critic who is likely to destroy himself if he insists on nothing but the best.

We have in this informative and open-minded discussion a book that will succeed admirably either as a text in college communications courses or as supplementary reading for capable students in secondary schools.

LEON C. HOOD

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THE LANGUAGE BAR. By VICTOR GROVE.
Philosophical Library. Pp. 160. \$3.75.

To reduce the language barrier between the "educated and literary section of the nation and the uninstructed majority," Grove would provide children with simple philological tools. These would make them early aware of the heterogeneous nature of English vocabulary.

ON THE USE OF THE DEFINITE ARTICLE WITH "NOUNS OF POSSESSION" IN ENGLISH. By ARTHUR ALGREN. ("Inaugural Dissertation.") Appelbergs Boktryckeriaktiebolag (Uppsala, Sweden). Paper. Pp. 221. Kr. 8:-.

Discusses why we say, "He was red in the face," instead of, "He was red in his face." This usage of the definite article, frequent throughout the history of the English language, dates back to the Germanic basis of our speech; modern German continues to use the definite article very frequently where English uses the possessive adjective.

STUDIES ON THE ACCENTUATION OF POLYSYLLABIC LATIN, GREEK, AND ROMANCE LOAN-WORDS IN ENGLISH. By BROR DANIELSSON. ("Stockholm Studies in English," Vol. III.) Stechert-Hafner, Inc. (New York City). Paper. Pp. 644.

Although it is often stated that as a general rule longer words adopted from the above tongues are accented in English on the second-from-last syllable (e.g., *activity*), this writer disagrees. His claim is that more frequently when a loan-word is taken into English the secondary stress in the foreign word becomes the primary accent in the English form (e.g., *melancholy*).

OUR REJECTED CHILDREN. By ALBERT DEUTSCH. Little, Brown. \$3.00.

A study of reform schools and juvenile delinquency. The author finds much to condemn in our methods. He suggests preventive measures against the causes of delinquency for which poverty is not wholly responsible.

A CONCORDANCE OF WALT WHITMAN'S "LEAVES OF GRASS" AND SELECTED PROSE WRITINGS. By EDWIN HAROLD EBY. University of Washington Press. Pp. 256. \$4.00. Fascicle I.

WALT WHITMAN OF THE "NEW YORK AURORA": A COLLECTION OF RECENTLY DISCOVERED WRITINGS. Edited by JOSEPH JAY RUBIN and CHARLES H. BROWN. Bald Eagle Press, State College, Pennsylvania. Pp. 147. \$4.00.

The *Concordance* is being issued in five paper-bound parts, of which this is the first, and its availability will certainly facilitate the study of Whitman's work, especially of the relationship between his prose and his free verse. The chronicle of Whitman's brief association with the *New York Aurora*, and the style and content of his editorial writings at the age of twenty-two, provide lively information about the poet during an important year in his life. Journalism students might well relish it.

General Nonfiction

THE HOUSE OF BEADLE AND ADAMS AND ITS DIME AND NICKEL NOVELS: THE STORY OF A VANISHED LITERATURE. By ALBERT JOHANNSEN. 2 vols. University of Oklahoma Press. Pp. 920. \$20.00.

"Written for collectors of Americana, Librarians, Booksellers, and for those who are nostalgic for the Books of their Youth."—A. J.

Volume I is a comprehensive discussion of pre-dime novels, what the dime novel was and was not, plots, characters, and authors, with a

history of the firm; the twenty-cent novel, the fifteen-cent novel, and cheap editions of popular authors; a roster of publications unfamiliar to many of us is included. There are excerpts from novels and many charming reproductions of covers (no dust jackets). The stories usually avoided sex. Courage, integrity, and valor were combined in their heroes. The villain usually was shot, repented, or disappeared. In time the novel deteriorated, and rather lurid tales for boys replaced adventure. Comparisons of dime novels with the comics, radio, and television are made by many readers. The last half of the nineteenth century, the social and cultural life of an era, is well represented by these publications and their readers.

Volume II is largely devoted to a bibliography of the dime novels with brief biographies of the authors and photographs of many of them. About 8½ x 11½.

CHARLES DICKENS: A BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL STUDY. By JACK LINDSAY. Philosophical Library. Pp. 459. \$4.75.

Mr. Lindsay believes that from one angle all Dickens' novels are re-creations of his childhood. These are affected by social pressures, changes in the Victorian world, the confusions of his personal life, and his revolt against the values he had exalted in earlier life. The author says: "I believe that Blake and Dickens are the two writers who hold the key to the nature of our cultural crisis today." He seeks to develop and define the "shift of levels" as Dickens writes on and on, himself an example of an epoch in human development.

KON-TIKI. By THOR HEYERDAHL. Rand McNally. Pp. 304. \$4.00.

A true story of the adventures of six men who planned and built a balsa raft on which they sailed from Peru to Polynesia to support a theory that the South Sea Islands were peopled from Peru. The raft, made of forty-foot balsa logs, was named "Kon-Tiki" in honor of a legendary sun-king. Pre-Inca Indians, Heyerdahl believes, had reached the islands sailing balsa rafts in A.D. 500. They had been overrun by the group from Peru in A.D. 1100. The author had made extensive researches concerning the Polynesian aborigines which convinced him of their Peruvian ancestry. Whether or not he convinces scientists, the story of his adventures, published in Norway in 1948 and translated into

many languages, ranks as a great sea story. "The cook's first duty each morning was to collect the flying fish which had fallen on the deck during the night." Fascinating. Photographs; end maps. September Book-of-the-Month Club selection.

SILVER TOWN. By JOHN WILLARD HORNER. Caxton. Pp. 322. \$4.50.

Georgetown, Colorado, in 1870 was a typical silver-mining center where thousands of people fought and struggled for easy money. If they found it, they spent it freely. Now it is a sleepy old town with memories and many old landmarks and buildings. The author has sought successfully to revive the period by the use of records, newspaper files, and clippings. Authentic Americana. End maps; illustrations; photographs.

KOREA TODAY. By GEORGE M. McCUNE. Harvard University Press. \$5.00.

Good background material for an understanding of the present trouble in Korea. It will be welcomed by readers who are interested in authoritative information about Korea and the war.

KIERKEGAARD THE CRIPPLE. By THEODOR HAECKER. Philosophical Library. Pp. 53. \$2.75.

A translation of an essay by an eminent Kierkegaard scholar which assesses the relationship between the Danish mystic's thought and the recently discovered fact that he was a hunchback.

JOEL CHANDLER HARRIS—FOLKLORIST. By STELLA BREWER BROOKES. University of Georgia Press. Pp. 182. \$4.00.

An account of Harris' sources for the Uncle Remus stories, which he said he presented "uncooked," with some light upon how much change they may have undergone in passing through his personality. Mrs. Brooks only states the problem of the correspondences between these Negro tales and others current among other peoples. Readable scholarship.

RELIGION IN HUMAN EXPERIENCE: AN INTRODUCTION. By JOHN R. EVERETT. Holt. Pp. 556. \$3.70.

A history of the Christian, Jewish, Hindu, and Buddhist religions. The book, designed as

an impartial survey, contains a handy glossary of religious terms. Mr. Everett feels that religion will exist as long as free societies do and that the creeds of the past, if they were soundly based on human experience, can, by reformulation where necessary, continue to appeal to future eras.

MY 66 YEARS IN THE BIG LEAGUES. By CONNIE MACK (CORNELIUS McGILLI-CUDDY). Winston. \$2.50.

The colorful story of an old man who has been successful in a glamour field—and knows it.

SEA SLANG OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY. By WILFRED GRANVILLE. Philosophical Library. Pp. 271. \$3.75.

Brings up to date the older "standard" works on slang in general and British sea slang in particular. Covers the period 1900-1949, although older terms still in use are included. Etymologies are by Eric Partridge.

THE POPULAR BOOK: A HISTORY OF AMERICA'S LITERARY TASTE. By JAMES D. HART. Oxford University Press. \$5.00.

A study of popular books—books read for pleasure—and the social compulsions which have made these books favorites with readers. That such books repeat the times in which they are written and read is generally understood.

Hart studies each age, beginning with the books owned and read by the Pilgrims. Facts on book sales, clubs, royalties, etc. Chronological index of books and also an index of books and authors. Remarkably comprehensive. Enlightening.

TRUMAN, STALIN, AND PEACE. By ALBERT Z. CARR. Doubleday. \$2.75.

One of the New Dealers carried over from the Roosevelt to the Truman administration relates some of the behind-the-scenes activities within the government which he thinks might, if they had not been frustrated by other elements of the administration, have kept Stalin friendly and prevented Communist triumph in China. These proposals were economic, not military.

AMERICA BEGINS. Edited by RICHARD M. DORSON. Pantheon. Pp. 438. \$4.50.

Careful selections of early American writing which should interest equally teachers of American literature and teachers of history. The material—vivid records of the first comers to America—is arranged in eight sections: "Voyages," "Natural Wonders," "Remarkable Providences," "Indian Captivities," "Indian Antics and Conceits," "Indian Treaties," "Witchcrafts," and "Forest Wars." Some of the authors are familiar, many are not. Twenty-six illustrations.

Fiction, Poetry, Drama

ACROSS THE RIVER AND INTO THE TREES. By ERNEST HEMINGWAY. Scribner. \$3.00.

Hemingway's eagerly awaited novel covers but a few hours in the life of Colonel Richard Cantwell, U.S.A. The scene is laid in Venice, and the fifty-year-old Colonel relives his experiences of two wars as he views old battlegrounds. He loves and is loved by a young Italian countess. Both know the Colonel is soon to die, and marriage is not considered. An intense, grim, and tragic story. The book's appeal may depend upon the mood of the reader.

THE LITTLE WORLD OF DON CAMILLO. By GIOVANNI GUARESCHI. Pellegrini. \$2.75.

The trials and tribulations of the parish priest Don Camillo were aggravated by the mayor, a leftist leader, who in turn is tormented

by a "certain black-robed reactionary." Don Camillo has a friend in the Lord, to whom he takes his troubles and from whom he often receives orders to do his duty. An extravaganza—and an attack on communism. Easy reading. Italian setting. August Book-of-the-Month Club selection.

PARADE'S END. By FORD MADDOX FORD. Knopf. \$5.00.

Some Do Not, No More Parades, A Man Could Stand Up, and The Last Post, reissued in one volume. When the story opens just before World War I, the lives of the ruling class are very comfortable. Tietjens and a friend have just boarded a luxurious train—but it is on the wrong line. It is running not from London to Rye but into the future. Critics are according high praise to the series as it is reread in the light of recent history.

THE MARRIED LOOK. By ROBERT NATHAN. Knopf. \$2.50.

Another fantasy. A middle-aged man who has forgotten what his wife looked like as a bride rediscovers her through a romantic idyll with Clementine—a fanciful projection of the wife's youth. Slight—but it has the Nathan touch.

OWEN GLEN. By BEN AMES WILLIAMS. Houghton. \$3.75.

Owen Glen at fifteen was working in a coal mine. He grew up in an Ohio mining town and knew the privations and hardships of mining families. He devoted his life to improving mining conditions. Although the theme of the book is coal-mining, it does not neglect small-town pleasures of the eighties and nineties. Rewarding and enlightening.

THE MILL ON THE PO. By RICCARDO BACCHELLI. Pantheon. \$4.00.

The central theme is the growth of a united Italy into a nation. Unusual choice of characters for a historical novel. This is a study of peasantry, although bandits, smugglers, and armies appear, as do floods, famine, and epidemics. Time: 1812-72. Another volume is planned which will cover 1872-1920. "Oppression breeds rebellion," and the little people of any nation pay the price. An excellent background for the many Italian books for serious reading now appearing.

SOUTH. By WILLIAM SANSMON. Harcourt. \$2.75.

Nine short stories by the young English author of *The Body*. The scenes are laid in Corsica, Italy, and the Riviera. Exotic and individual in language and style.

PURPLE PASSAGE. By EMILY HAHN. Doubleday. \$3.00.

By the author of *China to Me, England to Me*, *The Soong Sisters*, etc. The story of Aphra Behn, seventeenth-century beauty and writer—"famous and fantastic"—quite the character Emily Hahn delights to picture. History, romance, satire.

THE VEXATIONS OF A. J. WENTWORTH, B.A. By H. F. ELLIS. Little, Brown. \$2.50.

"For teachers who ever *felt* like heaving a book"—at a boy's head of course. A. J. was a

teacher of Burgrove Preparatory School. The literary editor of *Punch* naturally writes a humorous tale.

THE BARONS. By CHARLES WERTENBAKER. Random House. \$3.50.

A study of an American family, 1906-21. The Barons had built a great corporation, but they had become excited by vast wealth and power. Stuart Baron had ideals of integrity and responsibility that clashed with those of his family and associates, and he was as headstrong as the others. Many characters, conflicts of pride and ambition. Setting, a small town grown large—between Baltimore and Philadelphia.

MIDDLE HEAVEN. By MONA GARDNER. Doubleday. \$3.00.

A novel of Japanese customs, largely about the farmer and simple life. Published in *Ladies' Home Journal*. A sympathetic, human story.

A DARK STRANGER. By JULIEN GRACQ. New Directions. \$2.50.

A group of young people are spending their vacations at a typical seaside resort. A dark stranger joins them, and the atmosphere becomes sinister. The young Italian author was a German prisoner in World War II. His writing has been compared to that of Henry James and Proust. He is clever and discerning. His appreciation of nature is as keen as his understanding of people.

SELECTED WRITINGS OF GUILLAUME APOLLINAIRE. Translated with a Critical Introduction by ROGER SHATTUCK. New Directions. Pp. 272. \$3.50.

This is an unusually satisfying volume on every count. The poems of one of the most fascinating and important poets of the twentieth century provide a double delight by being printed on one page in the original French and on the opposite page in most felicitous translation. Mr. Shattuck's Introduction (54 pp.) combines objectivity and sympathetic penetration in such a fashion as to make biography and criticism polarizing lights instead of scholastic balderdash. The prose selections, although much fewer in number than the poems, are excellently chosen. The four illustrations are delightful (one is a Picasso drawing of the poet). The paper is good and so is the print.

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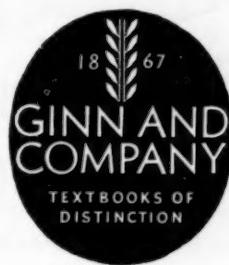
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